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MANY CELEBRITIES AND A FEW OTHERS

WILLIAM H RIDEING

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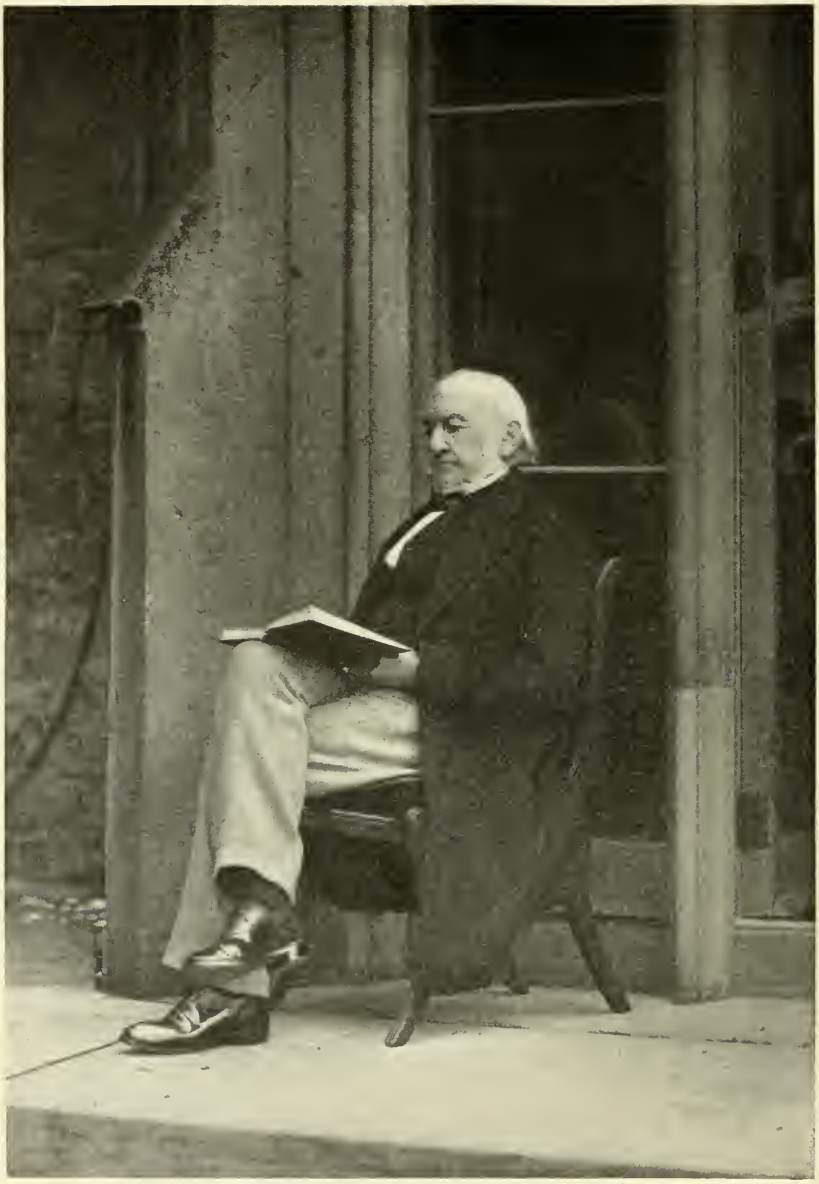
MANY CELEBRITIES AND A FEW OTHERS



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THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE
At Hawarden in 1897

MANY CELEBRITIES
AND A FEW OTHERS

A BUNDLE OF REMINISCENCES

BY

WILLIAM H. RIDEING

ILLUSTRATED

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1912

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MANY CELEBRITIES AND A FEW OTHERS

MANY CELEBRITIES AND A FEW OTHERS

I

A BOY'S AMBITIONS

AS A beginning, let me recall the famous old seaport in which he was born.

Whole neighbourhoods of that town were inhabited by sea-faring people and the commonest talk was about ships. The granite basins of the docks, the finest in the world, were full of them in shapes that steam was only beginning to displace: clippers and other full-rigged craft, barques and barkentines, brigs and brigantines, trafficking with the ends of the earth, all smelling of tea, coffee, palm oil, sugar, spice, hides, cocoanuts, cotton, spruce or pine. They came in on an eighteen-foot tide and departed on the flood with their crews singing chanties as they trotted round the old-fashioned, handle-barred capstan. The steam windlass was in the future, and the captain, and the men too, would have looked upon the auxiliary engine with as much disdain as upon kid gloves and scented handkerchiefs. Gales were always blowing and when the moon was out it appeared to be whirling like a silvered cannon ball through the amber and dove-coloured clouds. All the smoke and soot of the chimneys could not expunge the salt in the air; it filled the nostrils and could be tasted on the lips; it was spread by the river,

which, except for an hour or less at the turn of the tide, raced up and down as turbulently as the rapids below a cataract, making it necessary for the boats crossing it to steer a mile or so above their landings at the ebb and as far below their landings at the flood. There was exhilaration in it all, and the mad river reacted on the people, not making them as impetuous and restless as itself, but hardening them and strengthening them. They were not quick and high-keyed, but deliberate and plodding with extraordinary fortitude and pertinacity.

Now and then things happened which passed beyond the moment's wonder into history. We saw the *Alabama* sail from Birkenhead, some of us winking and some protesting, the latter a minority. Raphael Semmes, lean, sallow and nervous, much less like a mariner than a sea-lawyer, became the idol of an hour, and afterward the *Shenandoah* arrived fresh from her post-bellum depredations in Behring's Sea, her captain declaring to everybody's amusement that he did not know the war was over. I remember *Punch's* little joke with him, a cartoon depicting him landing and ingenuously asking, "Is Queen Anne dead?" The *Great Eastern* came, looming as big in comparison with the trans-Atlantic steamers of those days as a ship five times the size of the *Mauretania* would look now. She was beached and I walked under her keel, an atom in her shadow. The Cunarders and Inman liners, small as they were, entered port and left it with far more fuss than is made now over vessels of twelve times their tonnage. Cannon saluted them from the Rock Fort. An expedition to the Arctic or the Antarctic could not evoke more awe than did their departure on those staggering voyages

to Boston and New York, which took them from twelve to twenty days. One night the town shook as in an earthquake. Windows crashed and every light went out. The *Lottie Sleigh*, anchored in the Sloyne, had exploded her cargo of gunpowder. The famous landing stage burned down! Thousands of Americans embark and disembark at that colossal floating pontoon, which, nearly all of iron and swung to the shore by hinged bridges, rises and falls with the tide. People agape had to see the ruins for themselves before they could believe it. As rumour it was as preposterous as the time-worn witticism of the Thames afire.

Are these events local and immaterial, and only preserved in provincial history and the memories of sentimental and garrulous townsmen? I think not. The Editor of "Haydn's Dictionary of Dates" does not ignore them any more than he ignores the Siege of Troy, the Rape of the Sabines, Hannibal and Cæsar, the Armada or Trafalgar and Waterloo.

We were so concerned in it that the Civil War in America might have been at our doors and the Mersey running red from the carnage. Hard times smote us and passion surged high. The unemployed thronged the streets groaning and muttering at the corners. Usually they were overawed and sullen, but oftener than once they could stand no more and broke the bounds, and all the shops were closed and barred and shuttered. At my school we were a divided camp, the South far outnumbering the North. Under the banners of the unequal stars we fought desperately and resigned ourselves like Spartan children to the inglorious penalties that followed our subsequent slouch into the domestic circle with bleeding noses and mouths and

blackened eyes. Bull Run, Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg were repeated, Vicksburg, Chattanooga and Gettysburg were reversed. History has made no note of it, but General Grant was a puffy, overgrown, blubbering fellow, who cried as he ran away, while General Lee was small, hard, and as lithe as a monkey.

Whatever happened, the high winds noisily, the low winds with suave and insidious persuasion, reiterated in every boy's ear the lure of the sea, and boomed a whispered "Come to me — Come to me — Adventure — Riches," though the boxes on the quays for small contributions to the missions bore the inscription, "There is sorrow on the sea"; and nearly every Sunday, while the wind howled as though it would bring down the steeple, we sang the hymn, "O hear us when we call to Thee."

Even away from the river and the docks we were reminded of it not only by talk but by the cabs carrying home the returned crews, all very jovial, all with jingling money in their pockets, and, more tempting than money, with the spoils of their voyages, big branches of uncrushed dates, pomegranates, green cocoanuts, monkeys, parrots and other birds with astonishing plumage and ridiculous faces. Many of my friends shipped as apprentices, and I nearly yielded to the call.

Retiring to an attic where there was an old trunk with a convex lid, I one day assumed command of a Cunarder and took her out to sea or warped her through the narrow dock-gates and berthed her alongside the shed. That is more trying than navigation in deep and open water, and I had never seen it accomplished without much vociferation and some profanity. I stood, master of my ship, on the bridge between the

two paddle-boxes (in those primitive days the propeller was regarded as a precarious and untrustworthy innovation), huskily bawling my orders fore and aft, to which came ready answers, "Aye, aye, sir," and "Port it is," or "Starboard 'tis." All was going splendidly and without a scratch on the paint when a hawser snapped and we crushed into the dock-gate, on the port side, tearing away three feet of forward sponson. If profanity is ever pardonable it should have been forgiven then, but my mother opened the door of the attic and gently forced me down from the convex lid of the trunk on which I was bellowing. I was shorn of my dignity and authority just as a real captain falling under the displeasure of captious owners might be, but unlike him I was also shorn of an indispensable part of my clothing.

Our elders had little faith in moral suasion in those days, and whippings were frequent both at home and at school. The schoolmaster's cane could be robbed of some of its sting, however, if you secreted a hair in your palm before the cane swished down. Without knowing it, we were subjects of the ameliorating miracles of Christian Science.

While smarting and indignant, I threatened to run away to sea, and instead of deriding or threatening me, my mother said in a voice so level and impassive that it exasperated more than opposition could have done, "Why run away, dear? Let me know when you wish to go, and I will take care to have everything needful ready for you." She must have been a humourist. The statement of her willingness plucked from my many-hued romance all the feathers of its tail and wings.

I pondered the matter at tea-time when she conciliated my insurrection by giving me the "kissing crust" with

plenty of butter on it. Probably not one in ten thousand unlucky moderns has the slightest idea of what the "kissing crust" is, and I pity them. The bread was made at home and sent out to the public bakery, where, if it was well-leavened, it rose high above the edges of the pan in the oven and overflowed into pendants like the most exquisite carvings or stalactites. These crisped and browned not into one shade of brown, but every shade of brown, and not only into brown but into gold. They were like the fan tracery in the vaulting of a cathedral, and inside them the bread was warm and white and sweeter than in any other part of the loaf.

The kissing crust soothed me while it lasted, but I clung to my opinion that the proper way of going to sea was stealthily by a Romeo's ladder made of strips of sheets and blankets, lowered in the "vast dead and middle of the night" from a bedroom window. Early in the morning you shipped for a voyage to San Francisco, Madagascar, New Guinea, Valparaiso or the White Sea. The bo's'ain patted you on the back and with his quid in his cheek recognized your metal at a glance. "The right sort, the right sort, my lad! You don't come sneaking aboard like one of them pink-skinned, white-livered counter-skippers. You come through the hawsepipe, like a real sailor man, and no nonsense about you, eh? Now then! Aloft, my hearty! Aloft!"

His pipe sounded like an eerie bird. A terrific gale blew, as you crossed the bar, and you were ahead of all the others in reaching the top-gallant. What a gale it was with the boiling sea running mountains high, and the wind like a swinging mallet pounding you till you could neither speak nor hear! Before your watch ended you were cold, weary and drenched to the skin, but then

came the contrast of the warmth and light of the fo'c'sle, and the yarn-spinning of the old sea-dogs in your mess.

No healthy boy needs to be told that the spice of adventure is in hardship and difficulty. What lure was there in the picture in the boy's paper of a smug looking, foppish chap perched in the fo'c'stle head reading a copy of that otherwise interesting periodical, while the sails of his ship hung loose in the breathless doldrums. That didn't stir you a bit, but when the picture was of some seamy and leaky old tub, notorious for mishaps, lying dismasted and on her beam-ends off Cape Horn, with her drowned crew sported by the icy billows like dead fish, and bergs like Alps creeping toward her, you were frantic to be there. It made you long for the sea far more than did anything placid, comfortable and safe, even a coral island fringed with palms, though it must be admitted that when gesticulating and cannibalistic savages were added to the surf and exotic vegetation they were not without a charm of their own.

To the young the joy of life is in the scorn of it, and safety is the thought of only the timorous. "The spice of life is battle — and we wrestle a fall whether in love or enmity." Poe comprehended the superior incentive peril offers to imaginative and courageous boys, though his seamanship is, as in the case of Arthur Gordon Pym, never good enough for a certificate and occasionally spurious. His sloop booms along under the jib only after her mast has gone by the board! Despite that absurdity, I can quote him in corroboration of my point. Speaking of his friend Augustus, Pym says: "He most strangely enlisted my feelings in behalf of the life of a seaman when he depicted its more terrible moments

of suffering and despair. In the bright side of the painting I had a limited sympathy. My visions were of shipwreck and famine; of death or captivity among barbarian hordes; of a lifetime dragged out in sorrow and tears upon some gray and desolate rock in an ocean unapproachable and unknown." But the best presentation and confirmation of it are in Joseph Conrad's incomparable story, "Youth." No other writer of English ever interpreted the spirit of the sea and those who follow it with his acumen, and the paradox of the boy's inclination toward privation, mysterious as it is, has not eluded him.

I had some idea of discovering the Northwest Passage and discussed its possibilities with my father. I was a very restless boy. Nothing that I saw was ever at a standstill to my inner eye. The ships in the docks slipped their moorings while I gazed at them and reappeared in far off rainbow-coloured seas and harbours. I could not pass the Nelson monument without having the gallant figure in bronze come down and win Trafalgar over again.

"You think you could stand the Arctic cold and darkness?" my father calmly asked. I thought that I should not object to them. What could be cosier than the cabin of a stout little ship, with lamps lighted and books to read, and pemmican in abundance (the very name of pemmican made the mouth water, though I had but a glimmer of its composition), while she, gripped in ice, resisted pressure like a Saucy Castle under unavailing siege.

"Well, you might try it," he said.

I stared incredulously into his unmoving face till he added, "Suppose you go into the coal-hole, and spend

a few hours there. That may give you some idea of what you might expect."

He, too, must have been a humourist, but I took him quite seriously, and after a moment's indecision immured myself, more from an impulse of curiosity than obedience, in that part of the cellar which spread in utter darkness under the sidewalk. Cathay beckoned me from the farther end. Baffin's Bay lay behind me near the closed door. I was in my winter quarters and confident of reaching Behring's Sea in the Spring. The darkness was relieved and made splendid by the flashes of the aurora in quivering rays of violet, orange, sapphire, crimson and colours for which I could not find a name. Sport was almost as good as that of Mr. Roosevelt in Africa long afterward. I killed four polar bears, about a dozen sea-lions, and three musk-oxen. I elaborated my plans, and finding open water unexpectedly, struck north and planted the Confederate flag on the Pole, which to my surprise was only a moving mass of ice and snow.

Probably I spent the whole afternoon in that dismal cellar. It was damp as well as cold, and had a smell of stagnant water. My teeth were chattering, my feet and fingers numb at the end of my sojourn, and I put off further explorations, not abandoning them but postponing them till a later date, when they were to be renewed in an unforeseen way.

Another adventure urged its attractions. From a seat in the bay window I saw Captain Bebbington jauntily mounted on his glossy bay hunter going home to the fine house he had rented on the hill, which then looked down over meadows to the mouth of the river, with yellow sandhills on both sides, and the silvery-

gray Welsh mountains flickering in the haze beyond. My mother shrugged her shoulders and made what I called "a face." He had been one of my father's juniors in the Cunard service, but he had retired from that, and suddenly become a person of splendour.

"No better than a pirate," my mother said, but on some matters I had my own opinions and prudently reserved them.

A new kind of craft had appeared in the docks lately: small, rakish, slick and slippery steamers of light draught and graceful lines, which bore such names as *Lynx*, *Badger*, *Fox*, *Ferret* and *Greyhound*, indicative of both cunning and velocity. They were so slender, so unequal to the Atlantic, that some of them foundered in the first gale they encountered, even no farther away than the bar; and yet weather played but a small part in their destiny. Throngs gathered whenever one of them sailed. It was "Ahead, full-speed" from the moment she passed out of the docks, with her slanting funnels belching skeins of curdled brown smoke, and her paddle-wheels spinning a broad, white, spuming wake. Men picked for daring manned her and they left vacancies in the older services to less reckless successors. We stood on the quay watching her with wondering eyes till nothing remained of her but a saffron plume on the horizon out toward Point Lynas.

Sometimes neither the ship nor her crew ever came home. It was a precarious and exciting business. She might make Bermuda or Nassau and load an almost priceless cargo there for Galveston, Charleston or Wilmington, expecting to receive cotton or other staples of the South in return, yet after surviving the stress of the Atlantic she might fall a prey to the blockading fleet,

and be either captured or sunk. If captured, those of the men who were not killed had plenty of leisure for repentance in prison.

Captain Bebbington and I were of the lucky who eluded pursuit, however. He had made eight round voyages between Nassau and Wilmington, and the newspapers, which could be depended on then, said that his profits had been fully one hundred and fifty thousand dollars each trip. That is a matter of history — it is on record of him and other blockade runners. My own profits were quite as large as his, but I do not know what became of them, except that with them I intended to dress my mother in the heaviest and most brilliant fabrics in the shop windows, especially shot silks quivering with colours like my aurora borealis.

She wore a gown that was no novelty when I heard her say to me, "Dreaming again! Eh, my lad, how I wish you had more application!"

Nearly all the boys in my school had more "application" than I had. I was a trying and desultory scholar, whose only promise lay in the exercise known as "compositions."

Then the theatre caught me. We had an uncle who was editor of the *Chronicle*, the oldest paper in the town, a serious, dignified gentleman, who always dressed in black like a clergyman, and who to me seemed elderly and venerable. He may have been about thirty-five. We did not see him often, but when we did it usually was at the gates of Paradise with him as St. Peter. He invited us to the play, and the deference with which he was received by the acting manager gave me my first glimpse of the POWER OF THE PRESS. Capitals are indispensable in recognizing that august and

indefeasible influence. The prices were not high, the maximum — four shillings — for the boxes. The pit was a shilling and the gallery sixpence. The performance began at seven and did not end till eleven or a little later. At nine o'clock you could enter at half-price, with two hours of diversion before you, including two of the five acts of a tragedy, and the "comedietta" or farce, which always ended the entertainment. Never were there more liberal and more protracted programmes than the damp and inky broadsides of quarto size, which announced that the curtain would rise at seven with the "screaming" farce of "Box and Cox," to be followed by Shakespeare's "sublime" tragedy of "Hamlet," the whole concluding with the "roaring" farce of "No. 1, Round the Corner." Sometimes a "ballet divertisement" was interpolated in that stupendous triple bill, and Miss McGinty — that was the real name which the lady bore unashamed and without stooping to any pseudonym, or French or Italianized translation of it — Miss McGinty danced, like a wave of the sea, the Pavlova of the time and locality, with a supporting corps of tinselled star-eyed sylphs, whose pink legs looked eatable and always reminded me of strawberry ice-cream.

Of course *we* paid nothing, and acquired self-importance from our privilege. The acting manager hovered about us, and spoke to Uncle Dignan between the acts. "Quite all right, Mr. Dignan? If you would like to change your seats, a little nearer the front, or over there by the proscenium, I shall be most happy." He was a resplendent person, with a glittering gold watch chain as thick as a dog's leash, and diamonds on his fingers; as smooth and as glossy as a barber is when, cigar in

mouth, he leaves his shop for a promenade. We swelled with pride under his flattering attention.

The bill was changed nearly every night, and each man in his turn played many parts. The actors were humble and simple people, the greatest of them content with ridiculously small salaries, who obeyed the traditions of their business, and never varied, unless there happened to be a daring young fellow like Henry Irving among them, the accents and the attitudes stereotyped and prescribed by earlier custom. In a single week we might have "Hamlet," "Othello" and "Macbeth," alternated by such melodramas as the "Forest of Bondy," "Rob Roy" and "The Stranger," and at Christmas, he who had been Polonius the night before tumbled about with senile humour as Pantaloon, and Ophelia frisked and bewitched us in frothy and abbreviated skirts as Columbine. None of the theatres of New York or London can compare in sumptuousness with the old playhouse, if memory of the impression it made can be trusted, and if it was dimly lighted by yellow and sputtering gas, if it smelled of the play-bills, oranges, ginger-beer and perspiration those things did not in the least impair its fascination.

It was not the leading man, Mr. Cowper, who was so popular that his annual benefit ran through a whole week, nor the sweet little leading lady, Miss Hill, who enthralled me. It was the superlative beauty of Miss Bella Goodall, the soubrette, as she stood in the limelight, and sang "Cherry Ripe," which waved me back to Carthage. The audience liked a song anywhere in the long bill, and never questioned the appropriateness of such an interlude at any point in the play. One of the characters would say to the others, "Shall we have a

song?" leaving argument and action in abeyance, and the reply could only be inferred as acquiescent, for it could not be heard through the deafening applause of the audience. Then the orchestra would tune up and Miss Goodall, smiling and bowing, would open the most beautiful mouth in the world, a mouth and teeth which justified the simile of the rose with a drift of snow in it.

It bowled me over; I dreamed of it; it led me into temptation, and I succumbed. I must have been depraved as well as precocious, for having once seen her I became a guilty and clandestine thing, paying for intervals of heaven with long-drawn hours of fear and shame. After going to bed I dressed again, and stole out on tip-toes to the six-penny gallery to see Miss Goodall night after night. I would sneak to the stage door after the performance and watch for her and follow her, unobserved and at a respectful distance, till she entered her lodgings in Mount Pleasant. Even then I waited until she blew out the candle in her decent attic, and only then, glowing in the frost like one who has been to a shrine, I trudged home.

I learned to smoke, for smoking is manly, and I desired to be a man; I desired to be a man, because I wanted to declare my passion and throw myself at Miss Goodall's feet.

No other period of life is so restless and discontented as adolescence, and while the freedom of manhood is seen tantalizingly near, the shackles of bondage cramp our feet. One boy's experience is much like another's, and ludicrous as that infatuation may have been, I dare say many serious old gentlemen can, if their memories are long enough and candid enough, recall how they too were smitten by calf-love.

Quite recently a gray-haired vicar confessed to me a youthful passion of his own. In his undergraduate days he was madly in love, and meaning to propose he called on the lady one afternoon, when she received him with particular graciousness. He trembled, and rose from his seat with a half-paralyzed movement toward her, but sat down again before he could utter a word. She, of course, divined what was coming, as women always do in such predicaments, and without revealing her intuition by face or voice or any sign, she sighed, "I had forgotten that this is my birthday. How tragic it is! I am forty years old to-day — an old, old woman!" The vicar's sense of disparity must have been more acute than mine, for he resigned himself to the repulse while I, on the contrary, could not have been silenced had Miss Goodall confessed to fifty, for to me she was an unaging goddess untouchable by Time's blight and afflictions.

The psychologists claim that they can tell a man what he is fit for if they catch him young enough, but this science was not in those days on everybody's tongue or so familiar in newspapers and periodicals as it is now. One followed one's family in vocations as in religion and in politics. We had little freedom of choice, and class and environment controlled us and disposed of us. Most of my friends went to sea, or became apprentices, with indentures binding them for five years, in the offices of the owners and brokers of ships, or in the shipyards, or in those businesses which deal in cotton, rum and palm oil, the exports and imports of all lands and climes, which scented the wharves and the towering, sooty, flat-faced warehouses along the docks. As I have said, my father was in the Cunard service, and brothers of his and of my mother were mariners. We revered the

memory of a great-great-uncle, Sir Edward Walpole Browne, who had been an admiral in the Royal Navy, and a friend of the great Sir Robert Walpole.

Perhaps no other town of its size in the world had less in it to foster academic or literary tastes than that bustling, wind-driven, rain-swept old seaport.

The most eminent person in literature who ever dwelt there was an American, Hawthorne, who, serving as consul growled at it and gibed at it in his forlorn detachment, finding no consolation for its commercialism and materialism in the vigour of its people, the rush of its tides and the pageantry of its shipping. It was Hades to him, despite its river and its rain.

Another American discovered a glamour in it because it gave him his first glimpse of England and because "the elegant historian of the Medici," Roscoe — the adjective is Washington Irving's — was one of its townsmen. What can we do but smile now when Roscoe is so faded a figure, so seldom heard of, so little read — what can we do but smile condescendingly at the child-like delight of that gentle pilgrim, who wrote in his "Sketch Book:" "I drew back with an involuntary feeling of veneration. This, then, was an author of celebrity; this was one of those men whose voices have gone forth to the ends of the earth, with whose minds I have communed even in the solitudes of America. Accustomed as we are in our country to know European writers only by their works, we cannot conceive of them, as of other men, engrossed by trivial or sordid pursuits, and jostling with the crowd of common minds in the dusty paths of life. They pass before our imaginations like superior beings, radiant with the emanations of their genius, and surrounded by a halo of literary glory."

We did not see that halo on Roscoe's head, nor did he inspire as much reverence among us as did the merchant princes who lived in solemn state in mansions of the red sandstone which underlies nearly all that neighbourhood. It was the insular period. The grounds of every house of consequence were enclosed by walls almost as massive as those of the forts at the mouth of the river, which also were of red sandstone. Even little houses were girt and hidden by walls higher than their roofs. They had nothing to fear, and the inmates were prodigiously hospitable. Their monastic detachment was but a visible translation of the old dictum, "An Englishman's house is his castle." The owners of the ships and sugar plantations, the cotton kings, the ship builders, they in their magnificence compelled homage, and mothers and fathers held them up to their sons for emulation, as wisely as Miss Mitford held up a business man to James Payn when he beat embryo wings in a fluttering longing for a literary career. We looked on authors as sorts of *lusus naturæ*, queer, unaccountable, erratic people, from whom ordinary behaviour could not be expected. A small poetess visited us once, and put the house in constraint, partly in awe, partly in covert derision. I showed her one of my "compositions," and she stroked me and sonorously said (a compliment hardly understood): "Who knows? Perhaps a Macaulay in embryo, a Chalmers in bud." Beyond that I can only remember that she was extremely plain "about the head," as a candid friend of mine put it not very politely, and that I invidiously compared her with Miss Goodall and Miss McGinty.

Authors were few and far between there. One of them was H. J Byron, who afterward gave us "Our Boys" and

a chain of other flimsy and facile comedies, some of them very amusing in dialogue and characterization but tenuous and traditional in plot. He was not a native, but with speculative audacity had come down from London to take on his shoulders the management of the three principal theatres. I can remember him in his fashionable London clothes, drawling in speech, slow and lugubrious in manner, immitigably cynical and habitually bored. People repeated the clever things he said, as, for instance, his reply to the friend who met him and inquired, "What's the matter, old fellow? You look out of sorts. Liver?"

"No, my boy, not liver. Liverpool."

Aliens seem never to appreciate those charms of the old seaport which for us the clamorous winds cannot disperse and the driving rains cannot wash away.

Mrs. Oliphant belonged to us, but had gone away. W. S. Gilbert paid us an occasional visit when, long before his operetta and magisterial period, he produced one-hour burlesques with Charles Wyndham, a mere boy, in the cast. Then Uncle Dignan had a friend who, while plodding on the newspapers, was reaching out toward literature — a most agreeable young man, with the kindest eyes, a mellifluous brogue, and velvety manners, Justin McCarthy. But we regarded none of them seriously; never for a moment did we exalt them as Irving exalted his "elegant historian." A certain novelist offered himself as a candidate for Parliament, and it seemed presumptuous and audacious on his part. A grocer or a butcher would have struck us as hardly less suitable for the honours of Westminster than a mere literary person. Captain Bebbington, of the Blockade

Runners, continued to be a more popular hero than any of them.

A change was impending in my tastes and desires, however. If once the lure of the sea entangles one it is impossible to entirely free one's self from its meshes; it endures till death. One may escape the complete surrender to it that makes a lifelong sailor. Still its entreaty persists, and we buy a yacht, or join the naval reserve, or at least haunt the wharves in our spare time and surprise our friends by our knowledge of the history of ocean steamers. I did not renounce it, and it pleads with me to this day; but another lure began in another way to compete with it and to keep me in a silent corner at home, when my habit had been to dream my leisure away along the docks or on the landing stage. The sea was heard now in a minor key, not threatening compulsion while it pleaded, but coming to the ear like sleeping water under the summer sun. I do not know to a certainty just how or when the new ambition found its cranny and sprouted, and I wonder that it did not perish at once, like others of its kind which never blossoming were torn from the bed that nourished them and borne afar like balls of thistle down. How and why it survived the rest, which seemed more feasible, I am not able to answer fully or satisfactorily to myself, and other people have yet to show any curiosity about it.

Perhaps its origin was in the vogue of Dickens. He obsessed us. The neighbours ceased to be called by their own names and were nicknamed after his characters. The doctor's assistant became Bob Sawyer, and the boots at the Derby Arms, Sam Weller. The nurse in our own family was never spoken of except as Tilly Slowboy, and who could the ancient mariner in the little shop,

where you could buy blocks, tackle, and every part in exact and exquisite miniature of hull and rigging for the model ships we built — who could he be but Cap'n Cuttle?

Lady Dedlock, Oliver Twist, Joshua Bounderby, Mr. Gradgrind, Mr. Pecksniff, Mr. Bumble, Chadband, Quilp's boy, Mr. Snodgrass, Mark Tapley, Caleb Plummer, and Mr. Pickwick himself — they all passed our door or were met day after day, and some of them were intimates. Mr. Micawber was protean and multiple, a solicitor, a cotton broker, a house agent, a wine merchant, a derelict, whose occupation changed often, an inconstant bird of passage caught in a tunnel with sunshine at both ends of it and dispiriting dulness in the middle. He used to pat my head, and call me his "little man" in a loose, moist voice which always smelled of gin.

The humour and the pathos of Dickens liberalized us, loosened our purse strings, conciliated our antipathies, and, like a dew from heaven, fertilized the kindness of our hearts. For a time I took what he gave us only for the pleasure of it, the humour at a higher value than the pathos, but by and by he emerged out of the quality of one who merely entertained into prophetic and messianic proportions. It came over me as a divine revelation of one who was taking on his shoulders the burden of the world, and whose purpose, aflame in his passion for humanity, was to lash all false dealing and hypocrisy, and to lend a hand to all who were heavy laden and sorrowful.

Through this influence, fortified by the reading of bits of Carlyle ("Heroes and Hero Worship" and "Past and Present"), Kingsley's "Alton Locke" and Charles Reade, not to speak of the other printed food, digestible and

indigestible, in masses and morsels, the literary profession made a louder call than the deep, and the once belittled author became an object of idolatry even more exalted and more benevolent than Roscoe was to Irving. To all authors of sentiment I attributed in my fervour boundless goodness of heart and a benign compassion for all who were oppressed and in distress. Was imagination again playing tricks with me? As I had followed Miss Goodall from the stage door, so I now followed, whenever I met him, one I knew only by sight and reputation, whose sketches in a local paper had a Dickens flavour. I framed him in the halo of a saint, never thinking that, like Gilbert's poet, he may have been "heavy, beery, and bilious."

Nearly all light literature had a Dickens flavour as long as Dickens was in his ascendency. Never had any other writer so many imitators, nor a flavour so easily counterfeited. The flavour clung to those who caught it as tenaciously as the odours of tobacco, musk, peppermint, valerian, cling to all who touch them or come near them. Nothing was immune from its infection; it overpowered me. Tiny Tim, Little Nell, and the rest were unintentionally parodied; many of my scenes were laid in snow, and my characters, with grotesque names, were inordinately hungry and very fond of hot punch; that is, the best of them were. The baser ones, like Scrooge, were of frugal appetite, dyspeptic, and solitary, and for them the flowing bowl had no sort of attraction.

How at this period I watched for the postman! Envelopes of portentous bulk were put into my hands so often that I became inured to disappointment, unsurprised, and unhurt, like a patient father who has more

faith in the abilities of his children than the stupid and purblind world which will not employ them.

These rejected essays and tales were my children, and the embarrassing number of them did not curb my philoprogenitiveness.

Dawn broke unheeded and without reproach to the novice as he sat by candle-light at his table giving shape and utterance to dreams which did not foretell penalties, nor allow any intimation to reach him of the disillusionings sure to come, sharp-edged and poignant, with the awakening day. The rocky coast of realities, with its shoals and whirlpools, which encircles the sphere of dreams, is never visible till the sun is high. You are not awake till you strike it.

Up and dressed, careless of breakfast, he hears the postman's knock. Nobody outside the family, except the postman himself, is allowed to give that sharp "tat-tat — tat-tat — tat-tat — tat-tat!" on the brass Medusa's face which receives the imperious and exigent blows from the pendant springing from her coils. Lesser people dare no more than a single, muffled, deprecatory, and apprehensive rap, which the Kitchen answers tardily, reluctantly, and perhaps superciliously.

There is Something for the boy, which at a glance instantly dispels the clouds of his drowsiness and makes his heart jump: an envelope not bulky, an envelope whose contents tremble in his hand and grow dim in his eyes, and have to be read and read again before they can be believed. One of his stories has at last found a place and will be printed next month! Life may bestow on us its highest honours, and wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, the guerdon of a glorious lot, but it can never

transcend or repeat the thrill and ecstacy of the triumphant apotheosis of such a moment as that.

It was a fairy story, and though nobody could have suspected it, the fairy queen was Miss Goodall, much diminished in stature, of course, with all her indubitable excellencies, her nobility of character, and her beauty of person sublimated to an essence that only a Liliputian vessel could hold. Her instincts were domestic, and her domain was the hearthstone, and there she and her attendants, miniatures of the charming damsels in Miss McGinty's peachy and strawberry-legged *corps de ballet*, rewarded virtue and trampled meanness under their dainty, twinkling feet. Moreover, the story was to be paid for, a condition of the greater glory, an irrefragable proof of merit. Only as evidence of worth was money thought of, and though much needed, it alone was lightly regarded. The amount turned out to be very small. The editor handed it out of his trousers pocket — not the golden guinea looked for, but a few shillings. He must have detected a little disappointment in the drooping corners of the boy's mouth, for without any remark from him he said — he was a dingy and inscrutable person — "That is all we ever pay — four shillings per *colyume*," pronouncing the second syllable of that word like the second syllable of "volume."

What did the amount matter to the boy? A paper moist and warm from the press was in his hands, and as he walked home through sleet and snow and wind — the weather of the old seaport was in one of its tantrums — he stopped time and again to look at his name, his very own name, shining there in letters as lustrous as the stars of heaven

Soap bubbles and bits of coloured glass in a two-penny kaleidoscope! Forty years and more have slipped away. The bubbles are burst, and the kaleidoscope long ago passed to the dust heap. The cobbler is still at his last, weary but not yet spent. Sometimes he has tried his hand at Cinderella slippers, but they have been too clumsy for wear, and he has surrendered fine jobs of that kind to those who have a lighter touch than his own.

So many of us who call ourselves authors are like him, doing plain and honest work for ordinary use without ever approaching perfection. The cobbler may have the better of the comparison, for the world must have his shoes, while it can get along very well, losing little of wisdom and little of diversion, without the evanescent things it takes from us in urbane toleration, only because they are fresh from the shop, of the day's date, or baited with the bare possibilities, which so seldom materialize, of the new Aldrich, the new Stevenson, the new Hardy, the new Gissing, or the new Mark Twain, who is hoped for. Cobblers are never so numerous that each cannot earn a decent living and smoke his pipe contentedly, but there is not room for all the authors, and they are driven ashore like shoals of herring and mackerel by the pressure of the multitude of others behind them and around them. They must compete with the great dead and the living amateurs, without the jealous protection of any labour union; yet it must be confessed that the heaviest millstone around the neck of some of us, if not most of us, is the handicap nature has weighed us with in our own mediocrity. We see others climb to alpine heights, and are not jealous of them, nor do they from their eminence throw us over, or cease to be kind.

The compensation of the craft is in its fellowship and *camaraderie*. We understand and sympathize with one another whatever the disparity between us may be. For myself I would stick to the business because it brings even to the cobbler in it so many delightful friends. I remember a little dinner at which all those present were authors, distinguished and undistinguished.

"Haven't we had a good time?" cried Edmund Clarence Stedman, glowing at the end of it. "After all we are never so happy as we are when we are among ourselves."

II

FIRST LESSONS IN JOURNALISM

WHEN that little story of mine appeared in all the glory of print, Fame stood at my door, a daughter of the stars in such array that it blinded one to look at her. She has never come near me since, and I have changed my opinion of her: a beguiling minx, with little taste or judgment, and more than her share of feminine lightness and caprice; an unconscionable flirt, that is all she is.

I came to New York, and peeped into the doors of the *Tribune*, the *World*, the *Times*, and the *Sun* with all the reverence that a Moslem may feel when he beholds Mecca. To me, in my ardour and innocence, journalism was not as I regarded other professions, self-seeking and commercial. I idealized it (I was only seventeen) and attributed to it, the Church's aspiration and endeavour for the betterment of the world. And its power was on a parity with its beneficence. Thackeray's apostrophe to it in "Pendennis" ran in my memory. Notwithstanding my simplicity the power was not lost sight of, nor the humble rank of some of those, like Mr. Doolan, who exercised it:

They were passing through the Strand as they talked, and by a newspaper office, which was all lighted up and bright. Reporters were coming out of the place, or rushing up to it in cabs; there were lamps burning in the editors' rooms, and above, where the compositors were at work, the windows of the building were in a blaze of gas. "Look at that, Pen," Warrington

said. "There she is — the great engine — she never sleeps. She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world, her couriers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are ubiquitous. Yonder journal has an agent at this minute giving bribes at Madrid, and another inspecting the price of potatoes in Covent Garden. Look! here comes the Foreign Express galloping in. They will be able to give the news to Downing Street to-morrow; funds will rise or fall, fortunes be made or lost. Lord B —— will get up, and holding the paper in his hand, and seeing the noble marquis in his place, will make a great speech; and — and Mr. Doolan will be called away from his supper at the Back Kitchen, for he is foreign sub-editor, and sees the mail on the newspaper sheet before he goes to his own." And so talking the friends turned into their chambers, as the dawn was beginning to peep.

The "bribery at Madrid" did not blot the picture, as it ought to have done, and enthusiasm deflected the moral sense, as I fear it often can.

I remembered also Trollope's Tom Tower and the *Jupiter* (a transparent pseudonym for the *Times*) of which Tom was an editor.

"Is this Mount Olympus?" asks the unbelieving stranger. "Is it from these small, dark, dingy buildings that those infallible laws proceed which cabinets are called upon to obey; by which bishops are to be guided, lords and commons controlled, judges instructed in law, generals in strategy, admirals in naval tactics, and orange-women in the management of their barrows?" "Yes, my friend — from these walls. From here issue the only known infallible bulls for the guidance of British souls and bodies. This little court is the Vatican of England. Here reigns a pope, self-nominated, self-consecrated — aye, and much stranger, too — self-believing! a pope whom, if you cannot obey him I would advise you to disobey as silently as possible; a pope hitherto afraid of no Luther; a pope who manages his own inquisition, who punishes unbelievers as no most skilful inquisitor of Spain ever dreamt of doing — one who can excommunicate thoroughly, fearfully, radically; put you beyond the pale of men's charity; make you odious to your dearest friends, and turn you into a monster to be pointed at by the finger!"

All the papers were then engaged in eager warfare with the Tweed Ring, and their columns were filled with

exposures of its plunderings. The Tammany Tiger, glossy and content, sprawled over the city, fatter than it has ever been since, and bolder. Crime and vice flaunted themselves unashamed. No Comstock or Parkhurst had yet tackled them. Unmentionable photographs and books filled windows, and were peddled without secrecy on the street corners to any one who wanted them, either boys or men. Among the shops and banks on Broadway between Broome Street and Astor Place, rows of dives, bearing such names as The Do Drop Inn, were open day and night, and the customers, some of them minors, were waited on by tinselled and painted harridans in stiff ballet skirts. Along the wharves sailors were "Shangaied" under the eyes of public and police, sand-bagged and bundled aboard ships in which they did not want to go, and the poor immigrants landing at Castle Garden were fleeced and beaten by those "heelers" of Tammany appointed to protect them. The "lid" was off: in fact, there was no "lid" to the garbage barrel of those days; the average citizen seemed to regard it as a superfluity.

While the public was apathetic the Press flamed with moral and political indignation. Only one paper, I think, stood for Tammany, the *Star*, edited by Joseph Howard, Jr. The others were independent, and closely allied in their hostility to the common enemy, the *Times* and the *Tribune* taking the lead. They were all dignified, and, dare I say it, less frantic than they are now? The interview had not become the scandalous intrusion, the prying, house-breaking implement which abuse has made it. The word "yellow" had not come into use: it was inapplicable. As its advertisements declared, the *Sun* "shone for all" except those whom Charles

A. Dana did not like. The *Times* and the *Tribune* in appearance and in substance could not have been improved. The *World*, under Manton Marble, was "the gentleman's newspaper," notable for its wit, its learning, the polish of its style and its badinage. The *Evening Post* — how could it have been otherwise than good under the editorship of William Cullen Bryant? No other profession seemed to me to be so glorious or as satisfying as that exemplified in the high purposes and clean methods of those journals in the early seventies.

It was in the August of a bounteous year of fruit. The smell of peaches and grapes piled in barrows and barrels, scented the air, as it scents the memory still. The odour of a peach brings back to me all the magic-lantern impressions of a stranger — memories of dazzling, dancing, tropical light, bustle, babble, and gayety; they made me feel that I had never been alive before, and the people of the old seaport, active as I had thought them, became in a bewildered retrospect as slow and quiet as snails. But far sweeter to me than the fragrance of peaches were the humid whiffs I breathed from the noisy press rooms in the Park Row basements, the smell of the printers' ink as it was received by the warm, moist rolls of paper in the whirring, clattering presses. There was history in the making, destiny at her loom. Nothing ever expels it: if once a taste for it is acquired, it ties itself up with ineffaceable memories and longings, and even in retirement and changed scenes restores the eagerness and aspirations of the long-passed hour when it first came over us with a sort of intoxication.

I had no introduction and no experience and was prudent enough to foresee the rebuff that would surely follow a climb up the dusky but alluring editorial stairs

and an application for employment in so exalted a profession by a boy of seventeen. I decided that I could use more persuasion and gain a point in hiding my youth, which was a menace to me, by writing letters, and so I plunged through the post on Horace Greeley, on L. J. Jennings, the brilliant, forgotten Englishman who then edited the *Times*, on Mr. Dana, and on the rest. The astonishing thing of that time, as I look back on it, was my invulnerability to disappointments; I expected them and was prepared for them, and when they came they were as spurs and not as arrows nor as any deadly weapon. They hardly caused a sigh except a sigh of relief from the chafing uncertainties of waiting, and instead of depressing they compelled advances in fresh directions which soon became exhilarating, advances upon which one started with stronger determination and fuller, not lessened, confidence. O heart of Youth! How unfluttered thy beat! How invincible thou art in thine own conceit! What gift of heaven or earth can compare with thy supernal faith! "No matter how small the cage the bird will sing, if it has a voice."

Had my letters been thrown into the waste paper basket, after an impatient glance by the recipients, I should not have been surprised or more than a little nettled; but I received answers, not encouraging, from both Horace Greeley and Mr. Dana.

Mr. Jennings was a top-loftical gentleman, like the heavy swell of a Robertsonian comedy, say Captain Hawtree, who wore a monocle, and was very deliberate and cutting in speech and manner. When he appeared, an apparently languid witness, in the prosecution of one of the abounding grafters, the counsel for the defendant

asked him what the bundle was which he carried under his arm.

"Guess," drawled Jennings, yawning out of his frame of elegance and disdain.

"Answer my question, sir."

"Well, it might be clean collars and cuffs, and if you press me I may lend some to you, for you need them very badly." He would not be badgered or bullied. The virulence of the counsel did not discompose him in the least; it could not penetrate his immovable mask of hauteur and scorn.

An Olympian like that had, of course, no interest in letters from such an unaccredited and insignificant mortal as I was. Adversity may have softened him later in life, though adversity is seldom emollient: it rubs the wounds with vinegar, not with oil, and embitters instead of sweetening. Let us give him credit for all his splendid service in overthrowing the Tweed Ring. He led in that victory. Soon afterward he returned to his native land and ended his days there in dignified and inconspicuous quiet. I have on my shelves now a book of his, "Field Paths and Green Lanes," one of the best of its kind, a classic in its way, describing country rambles in the neighbourhood of London. A man who can content himself with the simple pleasures of the wayfarer, the beauty of nature, and humours of peasants may stand scathless under reverses and not disquiet himself because he is no longer seen or talked about.

Mr. Greeley was brief and final, but Mr. Dana, writing in his own hand (how friendly it was of him!) qualified an impulse to encourage with a tag for self-protection. "Your letter does you credit," he wrote. Those five words put me on the threshold of my goal.

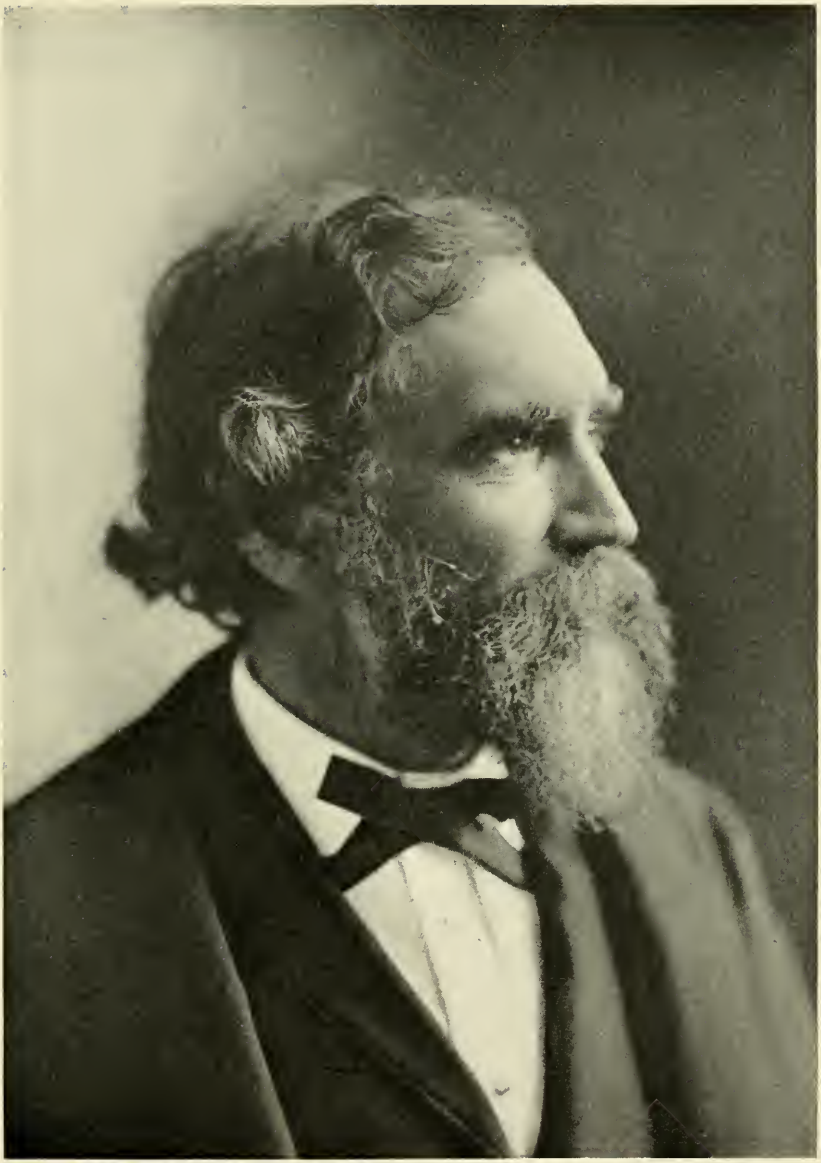
"Your letter does you credit, and I shall be glad to hear from you again ——" A door opened, and a flood of light and warmth from behind it enveloped me as in a gown of eiderdown. "I shall be glad to hear from you again three or four years from now!" The door slammed in my face, the gown slipped off and left me with a chill. But I did not accuse Mr. Dana of deliberately hurting me or think that he surmised how a polite evasion of that sort may without forethought be more cruel than the coldest and most abrupt negative.

I went farther afield, despatching my letters to Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and Springfield. In Philadelphia there was a little paper called the *Day*, and this is what its editor wrote to me:

> There are several vacancies in the editorial department, but there is one vacancy still worse on the ground floor, and the cashier is its much-harried victim. You might come here, but you would starve to death, and saddle your friends with the expenses of a funeral.

A man with humour enough for that ought to have prospered, and I rejoiced to learn soon afterward that he (I think his name was Cobb) had been saved from his straits by an appointment to the United States Mint!

His jocularity did not shake my faith in the seriousness of journalism. I had not done laughing when I opened another letter written in a fine, crabbed hand like the scratching of a diamond on a window pane, and as I slowly deciphered its contents I could hardly believe what I read. It was from Samuel Bowles the elder, editor of the Springfield *Republican*, then as now one of the sanest, most respected, and influential papers in the country. He wanted a young man to relieve him of some of his drudgery, and I might come on at once to



SAMUEL BOWLES
The Elder

serve as his private secretary. He did not doubt that I could be useful to him, and he was no less sure that he could be useful to me. Moreover my idea of salary, he said — it was modest, but forty dollars a month — "just fitted his." He was one of the great men of his time when papers were strong or weak, potent in authority or negligible, in proportion to the personality of the individual controlling them. He himself was the *Republican*, as Mr. Greeley was the *Tribune*, Mr. Bennett the *Herald*, Mr. Dana the *Sun*, Mr. Watterson the *Courier-Journal*, and Mr. Murat Halstead the Cincinnati *Commercial*, though, of course, like them, he tacitly hid himself behind the sacred and inviolable screen of anonymity, and none of them exercised greater power over the affairs of the nation than he, out of the centre, did from that charming New England town to which he invited me. The opportunity was worth a premium, such as is paid by apprentices in England for training in ships and in merchants' and lawyers' offices; the salary seemed like the gratuity of a too liberal and chivalric employer, for no fees could procure from any vocational institution so many advantages as were to be freely had in association with him. He instructed and inspired, and if he perceived ability and readiness in his pupil (this was my experience of him), he was as eager to encourage and improve him as any father could be with a son, looking not for the most he could take out of him in return for pay, but for the most he could put into him for his own benefit.

Journalism to him was not the medium of haste, passion, prejudice, and faction. He fully recognized all its responsibilities, and the need of meeting them and respecting them by other than casual, hap-hazard, and

slipshod methods. He was an economist of words, with an abhorrence of redundance and irrelevance; not only an economist of words, but also an economist of syllables, choosing always the fewer, and losing nothing of force or precision by that choice. He had what was not less than a passion for brevity. "What," he was asked, "makes a journalist?" and he replied: "A nose for news." But with him the news had to be sifted, verified, and reduced to an essence, not inflated, distorted, and garnished with all the verbal spoils of the reporter's last scamper through the dictionary.

How sedate and prosperous Springfield looked to me when I arrived there on an early spring day! How clean, orderly, leisurely, and respectable after the untidiness and explosive anarchy of New York! I made for the river, as I always do wherever a river is, and watched it flowing down in the silver-gray light and catching bits of the rain-washed blue sky. The trees had lost the brittleness and sharpness of winter's drawing and their outlines were softening into greenish velvet. In the coverts, arbutus crept out with a hawthorn-like fragrance from patches of lingering snow. The main street leading into the town from the Massasoit House and the station also had an air of repose and dignity as if those who had business in it were not preoccupied by the frenzy for bargains, but had time and the inclination for loitering, politeness, and sociability. That was in 1870, and I fear that Springfield must have lost some of its old-world simplicity and leisureliness since then. I regret that I have never been in it since, though I have passed through it hundreds of times.

The office of the *Republican* was in keeping with its environment, an edifice of stone or brick not more than

three or four stories high, neat, uncrowded, and quiet; very different from the newspaper offices of Park Row, with their hustle, litter, dust, and noise. I met no one on my way upstairs to the editorial rooms, and quaked at the oppressive solemnity and detachment of it. I wondered if people were observing me from the street and thought how much impressed they would be if they divined the importance of the person they were looking at, possibly another Tom Tower. The vanity of youth is in the same measure as its valour; withdraw one, and the other droops.

"Now," said Mr. Bowles sharply, after a brusque greeting, "we'll see what you can do."

I was dubious of him in that first encounter. He was crisp and quick in manner, clear-skinned, very spruce, and clear-eyed; his eyes appraised you in a glance.

"Take that and see how short you can make it."

He handed me a column from one of the "exchanges," as the copies of other papers are called. I spent half an hour at it, striking out repetitions and superfluous adjectives and knitting long sentences into brief ones. Condensation is a fine thing, as Charles Reade once said, and to know how to condense judiciously, to get all the juice, without any of the rind or pulp, is as important to the journalist as a knowledge of anatomy to the figure painter.

I went over it a second time before I handed it back to him as the best I could do. I had plucked the fatted column to a lean quarter of that length, yet I trembled and sweated.

"Bah!" he cried, scoring it with a pencil, which sped as dexterously as a surgeon's knife. "Read it now. Have I omitted anything essential?"

He had not; only the verbiage had gone. All that was worthy of preservation remained in what the printer calls a "stickful." That was my first lesson in journalism.

Attempts are often made to define the difference between journalism and literature without more than an approach to a generally satisfactory conclusion. "Literature in a hurry" has the impact of an epigram, but it is based on a false premise. Literature in the true sense is never in a hurry: it is leisurely and discursive; an art of the temperament, of the spirit, and of the finer senses; the evidence of things not seen, interpreting itself now playfully by indirection, like a sprite, now in the full value of picked words of unexpected and individual illumination. Journalism, on the contrary, must always be, or should be, in a white heat of energy and precipitancy, catching things as they fly, not decorating them or fondling them in rhetoric or musing on them as literature may, but seizing them with breathless expedition. It should be limited to matters of fact and should not be expansive and imaginative, but concrete and concise, a process of elision and enucleation, and that is how, I am pretty sure, Mr. Bowles took it. What a relief it would be if his view of it prevailed in all newspaper offices!

That word "enucleation" may be unfamiliar to some readers. I discovered it by chance after I had become an editor myself. Usually you say to your contributor that his article may be used if he will "boil it down," a kitchen phrase lacking both elegance and delicacy. Now I say "enucleate it"; that is, separate the wheat from the chaff, or bring out something, as a kernel, from its enveloping husk or shell. It may drive him to the dictionary, but then he cannot fail to acknowledge its

aptness. I was so elated by my discovery that I crowed over it to a medical friend.

"One of the commonest words in the profession; we are constantly using it," he said loftily, with an air of condescension. "You literary fellows, editors included, know less than any other people in the world. I always say so. Think of the ignorance of anybody who reaches middle life before he finds out the meaning of a simple and obvious word like that!"

He was jealous. I rejected the next article he sent me. He was always bothering me with articles, and was more vain of one accepted at fifty dollars than of a successful operation for appendicitis, which too easily brought him five hundred.

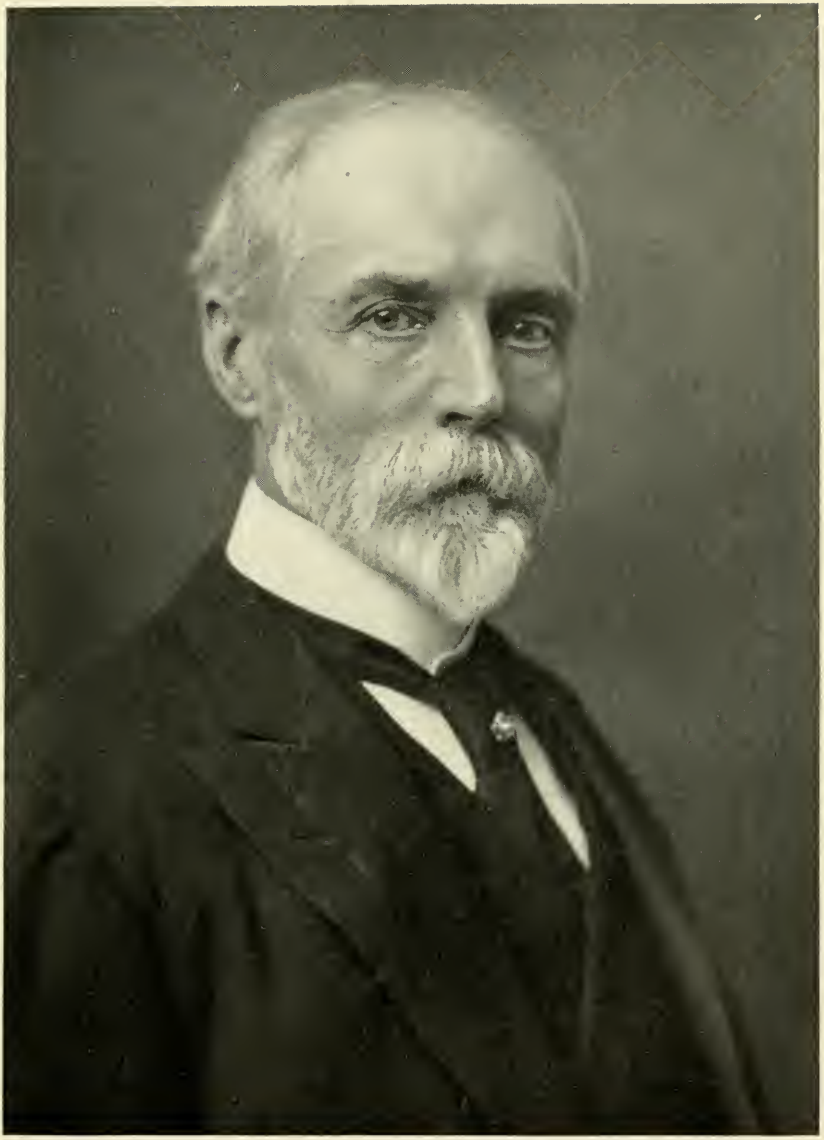
The ice of Mr. Bowles was only on the surface. He reminded me of old Adam in "As You Like It" — frosty but kindly. If one flinched at his angles, he melted and grew warm. The months I spent under him were as pleasant as they were profitable. The staff included Frank B. Sanborn (who is still active at eighty), and Charles G. Whiting, the poet. The ship of stars was in full sail. Think how splendid the period was when new novels were issuing from Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot, and Bulwer Lytton! Sanborn, who from 1868 to 1872 was a resident of Springfield, received advance sheets of "Little Women" from his friend, Miss Alcott, and I read them, behind his back as it were, before he could cut out the extracts he needed to justify the praise he lavished in a many-columned review. "The Story of a Bad Boy," with all its humour, had just finished its course in *Our Young Folks*, and it at once put Aldrich on one of the highest pedestals in my pantheon. Week after week instal-

ments of "Edwin Drood" were appearing in *Every Saturday*, and then, one afternoon, I read with moistened eyes on the bulletin board on the street front, that Charles Dickens was dead. A hush fell over the office and the town. Men and women wept. It was as though each of us had lost the dearest of friends. Never, I suppose, has any other author evoked such grief by his passing.

I was drawn back into the whirlpool; I liked excitement, and returned to New York, a much more eligible person, thanks to Mr. Bowles, than I was when I left it. Whitelaw Reid had become managing editor of the *Tribune*. I had seen him in Broadway (one saw everybody in Broadway in those days) dark, tall, straight, and handsome, but haughty in bearing; a man not likely to be mistaken for a trifler, irresolute and vague of purpose, or for a renegade to ambition. There was an air of puissance and of assured authority about him, and a glance revealed a martinet. However, he was very kind to me.

"Your letter persuades me," he wrote, "that you are the sort of man I wish to attach to my staff, but there is no vacancy. Still, if you come to New York, I think I can promise you at least enough work to pay your board bill."

I reminded him of that letter when I was lunching with him last summer, at Dorchester House, the palace he has occupied since he became with distinguished success ambassador to the Court of St. James. Time and affluence have mellowed him; velvet-gloved diplomacy has increased his charm: "Think of it, my dear," he said, taking me over to Mrs. Reid, "Mr. Rideing did me the honour to serve with me on the *Tribune* ten years before we were married!" How could he have



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HON. WHITELAW REID

been nicer! I am willing to expose my vanity in quoting him.

I was put among a crowd of "space men" employed to help out the regular salaried reporters. At half past ten every morning, all the members of the city department were expected to be present at the office, and at that hour the city editor had made up the "assignment book," in which the reporters found opposite to their names specifications of the duties assigned to them for the day. It was an index to the extraordinary variety that enters into a reporter's life. Not a spot in the city was left uncovered in the search for news.

Those were busy times in New York. The progress of the raid on Tammany filled the papers to the exclusion of other things. There was usually more work than the regular staff could attend to, though it included about thirty salaried reporters, and after they had been sent in every direction there still remained a number of "assignments" for the "outsiders" who were waiting for a chance job.

I waited at the office to see a proof of an article I had written and went home happy on finding that it filled nearly three quarters of a column. Three quarters of a column at ten dollars per column — the price then paid to "outsiders" — would make seven dollars and a half, a good day's work, thought I. But on the next morning I found that, as the pressure on his space had increased, the night editor had been obliged to cut my article down to about ten lines.

I haunted the office early and late, but everything I did was compressed into a meagre paragraph, and at the end of a week my total earnings amounted to less than five dollars. The results of the second week were

a little better, and of the third week better still, though not yet enough to pay my expenses, moderate as they were. Before the end of the month, however, I was sent to Norwalk to look up one of the "ring," and through real-estate records and the town officials I discovered proofs of his frauds.

I had just time to catch the Boston express for New York, and, sitting on one trunk in the baggage car, I made a desk of another, and dashed off my article as the train whirled along through the night. I appreciated the value of the facts I had obtained, and knew that I could elaborate them to any extent I pleased. My pencil flew over the paper with a facility of which I had not thought it capable. When we reached Forty-Second Street it was close upon midnight, and no horse-car was visible. I could not afford a hack, so I set off at a run for the office, and never stopped until I dropped my article on the city editor's desk. The next morning the article appeared "double leaded" on the front page; it made a stir, and in the afternoon he came to me and told me that there was a place for me on the regular staff with a salary of twenty-five dollars a week.

III

MIDNIGHT OIL AND BEACH COMBING

THE *Tribune* had not yet moved into its present commodious quarters, nor given occasion for Mr. Dana's salute to Mr. Reid as the "young man in the tall tower." It was housed in a drab, precarious shell on the same site. The rooms of the editorial department were small, dirty, and dilapidated, but what a staff it was that crowded them!—John Hay, George Ripley, Isaac H. Bromley, Bayard Taylor, William Winter, E. L. Burlingame, and Clarence Cook, besides Mr. Greeley and Mr. Reid. There were not desks or chairs enough, and sometimes we had to wait in turn for them, standing until they became vacant. Clarence Cook was the art critic and a severe one. "Are you through with that desk, Cook?" Bromley asked him, and, on receiving assent, added, "Then scrape away all the blood and feathers and let me sit down."

Hay delighted everybody in the office by his wit and kindness. One evening he cried out to Bromley and Bishop: "All done, fellows!"

"What have you been writing about?" Bishop asked.

"I've been going for them kings again, and if they only knew it, they'd be shaking in their boots."

On another occasion long afterward, when the anti-imperialists were urging that the United States should not retain the Philippines but give them away, or sell them to Germany or Japan, Hay said:

"That reminds me of the young woman who had got religion and was telling her experience in a conference meeting. Wishing to adduce proof of the thoroughness of her conversion, she said: 'When I found that my jewellery was dragging me down to hell, I gave it all to my sister.'"

He wore no beard in those days, only a raven and somewhat desperate-looking moustache, and he always dressed in black, whether for mourning or not, I do not know. Out of doors he sported a silk hat in all kinds of weather. I remember his attire because it was similar to that which the artist provided for John Oakhurst in one of the illustrations to Bret Harte's "Outcasts of Poker Flat."

He was very kind in many ways to the younger men. Occasionally the voice of a novice in the office would be heard above the sound of moving pens and pencils, pleading for information: "Who was Dahlberg?" "What did Van Heemskirk do?" "Where's Kastamoonee?" A murmur of protest instead of reply would follow: "Shut up!" "Go back to school!" "Throw something at him!" Each had his own difficulties and protested against the interruption, except Hay. While the questioner searched the ceiling in despair relief would come from Hay as from a talking encyclopædia, without a moment's delay in the task that absorbed him.

Mine was night work; that is to say, it began earlier than five o'clock every afternoon, and never ended before half-past two in the morning, when, in the fetid air of the low-roofed, narrow, insanitary room, packed with reporters and assistant editors, and foggy with tobacco, I could at last stretch in my chair and chat for a few minutes with my vis-à-vis, the amiable and optimistic

Isaac Nelson Ford, who after more than forty years still serves the same paper in the important and enviable position of its London correspondent, as successor to Mr. George W. Smalley. I call Ford the oldest of my friends, but except in years he is the youngest.

We read the city "copy," polished it, condensed it, and gave it headings, ever watchful in all our haste that nothing libellous or contrary to the traditions and usages of the paper should pass. The matter reached us sheet by sheet, as it was dashed off by the men in the throes of the closing hour, and after revision, which eliminated errors of fact and taste, it as rapidly flew from us into the creaking little box which shot up and down between us and the composing room, on the next floor. There were no pneumatic tubes, telephones, or electric bells in that office. Up and down continually went the box, slung in its chute by a frayed cord, until the last line of the last sheet of quires and reams ended the strain in the two words, "Good Night."

Those were extraordinarily busy and exciting times, and every man on the staff gave himself unsparingly to them. The exposure and defeat of the Tweed Ring had hardly been accomplished before Mr. Greeley received the Liberal Republican nomination for the presidency, and throughout that campaign the *Tribune* office became the rallying place of the politicians who supported him, including diamond-fronted leaders and short-haired, brown-mouthed "heelers" of the slum wards. They were at our elbows and over our shoulders early and late, sober or drunk, clean in person sometimes and frequently not, decent in speech and occasionally indecent, ready to talk to the "devil" if they could not reach Mr. Greeley himself, or some one near him. The

foul air became fouler and more difficult to breathe; the fumes of alcohol and monstrous cigars took away the flavour of the mild tobacco we smoked in our inoffensive pipes, such as "Bull Durham" and "Fruits and Flowers." The barbarians were upon us and civilization seemed "played out."

Mr. Greeley was a pathetic figure through it all, wearied, excitable, and short-tempered. His face was as clear and as ingenuous as a child's. An actor making up for the part of an idealized farmer in a play could not have proved fidelity to nature better than by reproducing his open and fresh countenance with its careless fringes and wisps of hair, and his loose, easy-fitting clothes, neat and clean, but with no more shape and no finer texture than the Abigail of any old homestead could give them. The soft hat on his head might have been dropped there by a wind from heaven. Indifference to appearances and no thought but of comfort were proclaimed almost too loudly, and his habit of having one trousers-leg turned up while the other was turned down left even in my innocent and unsophisticated mind an unwilling suspicion of intention.

He seemed too like "the real thing" to be it. Amiable and odorous of pastures and barns and hayricks as he looked in repose, he was irascible, and perhaps not less like the real farmer because he swore. One of the reporters had been sent out to investigate a charge of adulteration brought against a firm of confectioners, and confirmed it. When his report appeared, Mr. Greeley was furious, for the confectioners were old friends of his. Excuses that should have been unnecessary did not appease him.

"G — d d — n him! discharge him!" he cried shrilly,

though curiously enough his face preserved its apostolic benignity, even while the oaths were flying from his lips. I am glad to add that he probably never thought of the matter again, and that the blameless young man was not discharged.

His squalls usually blew themselves out without uprooting anything. One morning he came down to the office in a rage because there was a misprint in one of his editorials. Bounding upstairs into the composing room, and shaking a copy of the paper folded across the page to show the offence, he shrieked: "Show me the man! Show me the man that did this!"

A very old compositor was pointed out to him. Mr. Greeley looked at the culprit, who shrank under his gaze. All his indignation subsided, not another word was spoken. He turned and crept downstairs as if he and not the old compositor had been the offender.

He wrote in another editorial of "champagne and Heidsieck," referring to the lavish living of the Erie conspirators, and when the tautology of the phrase was explained to him he said: "Well, I guess I am the only man in this office that could make a mistake of that sort."

His outbreaks of temper often rent the air toward the end of his campaign, and when the *débacle* ensued, loyal and energetic as we had been in his cause, our sighs had their source in relief as much as in sorrow. The morning after the elections an editorial was printed under the head of "Crumbs of Comfort." The crumbs of comfort were that, though Mr. Greeley had lost, consolation could be derived from the thought that the office would be free in the future from the invasion of the dirty barbarians of his camp. It echoed, I think, the private opinions of all of us.

Restored to its former condition, overcrowded as that was, the office became quiet and spacious in comparison with what it had been during the campaign. While the editorial was a fine example of the mordant satire poignantly phrased which more than one of the staff excelled in, no one could regard it as politic or gracious, which, of course, its author never meant it to be. Mr. Greeley wanted a retraction or an apology, but it never appeared, and gossip whispered that that made the last insupportable straw in the burden of the chagrined and failing old man, who soon afterward retired to his farm at Chappaqua.

Are there coffee and cake saloons in the basements of Park Row and the tail end of Chatham Street now? Is Oliver Hitchcock's gone? In the early seventies there were plenty of them. They existed for owls: for the conductors and drivers of the old, jingling, creeping Third and Fourth Avenue horse-cars; for newsboys and bootblacks; for the unwashed and unhoused waifs of the night; for printers, reporters, and editors. All they offered was coffee in earthenware cups as heavy as bombshells, and hot soda biscuits upon which you deposited pats of very yellow butter similar to that slighted by Perkins Middlewick in "Our Boys" as "common Do'set." The tables were uncovered, the floors bare, or sanded, or sprinkled with sawdust. The gas waxed and waned, an emblem of despair and irresolution.

But what merry times we had there when we descended into that atmosphere of old leather and old clothes at about midnight for half an hour of rest and simple fare! Distinctions of rank were sunk in those intermissions, and sometimes the young fellows had the glory of sitting with their elders and superiors — with John Hay, Bromley,

Noah Brooks, and Charles T. Congden, that queer and brilliant man, whose editorials were so good that they received the unusual honour of republication in a book. I have seen Mark Twain and Bret Harte there also, and now and then our laughter would be so loud that the dingy, taciturn company at the other tables would look at us suspiciously, wondering how we could be so gay in a world that was so dark and joyless to them.

Years afterward, when Mr. Hay preceded Mr. Reid in the ambassadorial honours of London and received his friends at his stately residence in Carlton House Terrace, you had but to whisper in his ear, "Oliver Hitchcock," and however serious he might be his face would at once soften into a knowing smile, as though you had spoken a password of fellowship in the guarded privileges and pleasures of some secret society.

Our work done, Ford and I flew together for the three o'clock boat of the Fulton Ferry to Brooklyn, swallowing an oyster on the way at one of the booths in the old market. The river was unbridged, but night after night, month after month, we watched and were fascinated by the slow growth of the two squat piers, then no higher than a house, that were to anchor the cables of the bridge that was to be. The spire of Trinity pricked the stars, it soared so much above its surroundings. The coastwise steamers were cockle shells; the newest ocean liner, talked of as a marvel, was less than a twelfth the size of the *Olympic* and of no more than half the speed of the *Mauretania*. All the lights the river caught were of oil and gas, yellow spots insufficient to disperse its mystery as it sobbed and swirled under the impenetrable curtain of the night. Brooklyn was peace-

fully, drowsily, respectably suburban; it took our tired heads on its bosom and rested them like a mother.

I never got to bed earlier than four o'clock, and had to be called at nine, because in addition to my *Tribune* work I was sending one weekly letter to the Boston *Globe* and another to the historical *Galignani's Messenger* in Paris. Youth is a spendthrift, and never saves itself or reckons until the mischief is done how usurious nature is with her creditors when they mortgage themselves to her.

There was security in my new position, and of course I, boylike, exaggerated its distinction and importance; but I missed the variety and freedom of my work as a space man. No other work could be more full of interest and adventure than that of a reporter who scours the city and suburbs in search of material — not the reporter who, depending on stenography, is sent out to report meetings and functions, but the casual, peripatetic observer who must discover things unforeseen, or go hungry. A paragraph or an article acquired value with the *Tribune* if it had some literary quality such as neatness of phrase and the flash of colour, though it might not have any bearing on the day's news. The city is packed with curiosities which the inhabitants in their haste and preoccupation do not see until their attention is called to them. When the late James R. Osgood visited London for the first time I asked him what he thought of it.

"That it had never been discovered before I got there," he replied. "There were so many things in it that I had never been told of; the hundreds of books I had read about it had not included half."

And New York, or any city, is ever new and always has fresh material to unfold to him whose observation is not obscured by familiarity or indifference.

My beat took in the wharves, the doss houses, the hospitals, the medical schools, the foreign colonies, the shops of queer trades, Castle Garden, prisons, and the morgue.

One day I visited a row of tenement houses in Willett Street, monopolized by ragpickers, who are a much cleaner and more prosperous class than inference makes them. The head man was Martin Schreiner, who told me that when he first came to America from Germany he had been employed as a domestic servant by Washington Irving at No. 3 Bridge Street, round the corner from Bowling Green, the neighbourhood of fashion and substance in those days, as it ought to be now; for where else, from the Battery to Yonkers, is there so beautiful a prospect as the queen of bays and its crescent of distant, softly moulded hills, changing in colour every hour and mixing the sweetness of country air with the breath of the sea? If I were a millionaire I'd build there now.

We sat and smoked together, Martin and I, watching the ragpickers coming home and sifting their bundles in the yard, while he held the ghost of Diedrich Knickerbocker by the coat tails. The house was not Washington's own, but that of Ebenezer Irving, his brother, and for his privacy Washington had a front room on the second floor, used in combination as sitting room, bedroom and study. Much of his time was spent there. After an early cup of coffee and a slice of dry toast with the rest of the family, it was his habit to seclude himself until eleven o'clock, and then to set forth on his morning walk in fastidious attire, as spotless and as smooth as that of a dandy. He dined with the family at three in the afternoon, drinking one glass of Madeira, one and

no more. I remembered how abstemious he was — how shocked when he called on Charles Dickens in the Astor House, and Dickens instantly asked him what he would have to drink.

He was not often home to tea, but was usually in his room by nine o'clock, and again at work. The room was furnished cheerfully, with plenty of books and pictures, and in winter a blazing coal fire burned in the open grate, before which he delighted to sit. When he retired, a small table, holding writing materials, a few books, and some wax candles, was drawn to the side of the bed, and from time to time during the night, as thoughts occurred to him, they were jotted down for future use. Much of his work was done at night as he lay in his bed, and the last of the candles would sometimes be aglow in the early morning.

If his ghost could have heard all that Martin said of his generosity to him and the other servants, all of whom had been in the family for long periods; of his affection for his nephews and nieces, and of his courtesy to all whom he met, I have no doubt its modesty would have compelled it to vanish sooner than it did.

At the corner of Spring and Varick Streets remained the last of the old bell towers of the fire department, surviving the days when there were no alarm boxes and no telegraph. In a box at the top of a spiral stairway, twisting through the open frame, a watchman scanned the neighbourhood through a binocular glass, like the lookout in a cro'nest at sea, scrutinizing and weighing the possibilities of every glow and every plume of smoke, and raising a lever which rang a deep and solemn bell whenever he discovered an accidental or incendiary blaze. No candle or lamp was allowed in the

tower, and the old man was glad to have me sit and smoke with him, as I often did, when night drew on, and the lights visible earlier went out faster and faster after ten o'clock. Under his rough coat he was a sentimentalist. "Yes, 'tis lonely I be when I see them go, wan by wan, like friends dying." He was an inarticulate Teufelsdrockh, and I imagined him thinking what he could not say: "Upward of five hundred thousand two-legged animals without feathers lie round us in horizontal positions, their heads all in nightcaps, and full of foolish dreams. Riot cries aloud, and staggers and swaggers in his rank dens of shame; and the mother, with streaming hair, kneels over her pallid dying infant, whose cracked lips only her tears now moisten. All these heaped and huddled together, with nothing but a little carpentry and masonry between them; crammed in like salted fish in their barrel, or weltering, shall I say? like an Egyptian pitcher of tamed vipers, each struggling to get its head above the others. Such work goes on under that smoke counterpane! But I, *mein* Werther, sit above it all; I am alone with the stars."

I have said that you met everybody on Broadway between Twenty-third Street and the City Hall. Walking was far more a habit as a constitutional exercise than it is now. Day after day I used to meet William Cullen Bryant on his way to or from the office of the *Evening Post*, diminutive, erect, keen-eyed, and buoyant, with a streaming white beard, the picture of Father Time himself; Edwin Booth, with his ivory face, abstracted, and steeped in gloom; Lester Wallack, above ordinary height, and handsome, a modern Beau Brummel, but nearly as much "made up" on the street as in the theatre, his ringlets and moustache dyed to a purplish

jet, his cheeks artificially ruddy; Peter Cooper, tall but stooping and shuffling, with a long, pale, dreamy face and a snowy, blowing, uncared-for beard; Roscoe Conkling, pale of face, imperious in demeanour, with a long nose that always seemed to be fishing for his chin, little different from the caricatures which represented him as a pouter pigeon; Samuel J. Tilden, small and puckered wearing an indefinable smile behind which lay the unfathomable; Dion Boucicault, floating in the music of his own brogue, round-faced, pallid, white-tied, like a priest, who could not speak without being witty and flattering; the fascinating E. A. Sothern, the original "Lord Dundreary," debonair, polished, lithe, with an English complexion and fine features, and the air of drawing-rooms rather than of the theatre; the "Count Johannes" (alias Jones), who was theatrical or nothing, the barn-stormer of caricature, who played with a wire screen in front of the foot-lights to protect him from the missiles his audiences took in baskets to throw at him — the "crushed tragedian" parodied during a long season by Sothern in an amusing comedy by Byron and — "Commodore" Vanderbilt, the founder of the Vanderbilt fortunes.

The "Commodore" and I became friends. He resembled a bishop or an archbishop in his benignity and suavity. A white tie and a long black coat, like a cassock, encouraged that inference, but had you seen him anywhere near the House of Lords you would have more probably taken him for an hereditary legislator, an ideal aristocrat of acres, ancient privileges, and long descent. He was neat and dapper, with a girlish complexion of pink and white, and abundant hair as soft and glossy as the down of a bird. When he smiled and bowed, it

was with the air of waiting on your pleasure and being anxious to hear how he could be of service to so meritorious and distinguished a person as yourself. How could this be the old ferry-man who, scarcely more than a generation before, had sailed his sloop between the Battery and Staten Island, carrying passengers and freight at reasonable rates? The illusion lasted until he spoke, and then speech, so often the betrayer of fine appearances, put him down to the level of the gossip of the country store. Though his vocabulary was meagre, it did not lack vigour or spiciness, and eked out by slang and expletives it never left you in doubt as to his meaning.

He had a private office in a dingy, old-fashioned little house just west of Broadway in Amity Street. I think it was in Amity Street, though it may have been only contiguous to that. Inside and outside the house had the aspect of a quiet, private dwelling, and when I called, he always received me in the parlour in the most encouraging way, beaming on me as if I had been at least a promising nephew of his, or perhaps a grandson of whom he was fond and had reason to be proud.

"Sit down, sonny; sit down. Cold, ain't it?"

If the weather was at all chilly a light fire of sea-coal was sure to be burning in the grate, and he would seat me at the side of it while he stretched himself at the other and toasted his feet over the fender. His time seemed to be wholly and ungrudgingly at my disposal, as though he had nothing else to do in the world but talk to me, or listen to me. Now, I thought, I shall get something worth while, a column or two that should lead to immediate promotion for me. Then I would ply him with questions of ships, railways, politics, and finance. He listened to every question and pondered it, rubbing his

hands now and then, smiling all the time the heavenly smile of a good bishop and occasionally chuckling. But he never answered me.

"That's interesting. Say! That's a poser! How did you happen to think of that, sonny? Now tell me what you think of it? — that's what I want to know. Beats the Dutch how you fellows find out all these things."

And he would rise and pat my head, or rumple my hair in an ostensible ecstasy of appreciation, without once revealing his own opinions on anything at all. He had not the faintest idea who Socrates was, but his method was Socratic. It was vexing to leave him without a line to print as the result of my call on him, which to an onlooker must have seemed so opportune for confidences and revelations. Confidences and revelations there were — mine, however, not his — and I am sure they were immeasurably less profitable to him than his would have been to me. Yet when he saw me to the door, to which I went with never a sign from him that I had outstayed my welcome, he would repeat the patting of my head, and say, "Come again, sonny," and under the charm of his geniality I would forget my disappointment.

All I ever got out of him, except the outlines of this portrait, was the warmth of that fire and his interest in me, which, flattering enough, must have been dissembled, or taken only because his heart was open to youth and my simplicity amused him. He might have put money in my purse, but I have learned by experience that rich men do not want company. They see, perhaps, a mischief in wealth which I, and many others, have not yet discerned and could readily extenuate if it were revealed in all its iniquity.

Each generation has its own pills and plasters, and its own surgeons and physicians, who, like all other public servants, distinguished and undistinguished, are displaced and forgotten by the next. If I mention Willard Parker, Lewis A. Sayre, Ogden Doremus, Alfred Loomis, Fordyce Barker, William A. Hammond, Stephen Smith, and J. C. Draper, their names will fall flat on the reader, unless he is old or middle-aged, and fail to awaken in a lay ear any echo of the reputation they had in their day. I attended the clinics and lectures, not as a student, but in the pursuit of any scenes or events which could be turned into "copy," the trade word for the written sheets which feed the insatiable, gormandizing press. I see myself again in the curious, observant groups of students going from cot to cot and from ward to ward at the heels of those professors, listening to them in the lecture room and in the operating theatre, with drawn nerves and bated breath. I suppose it is the reaction from "drawn nerves" and from the tension of their occupation and the responsibilities and solemnity of it which makes medical students so obstreperous when the strain on them ceases.

In the intermissions between lectures the air is filled with catcalls, whistling, and snatches of song. A sign positively forbids smoking, but they smoke, and not only smoke, but whistle, sing, and whoop. A small pillow is discovered on the rostrum, and a demure-looking youth who has spied it from afar strides over the rail and secures it. Returning to his seat, he poises it and threatens to dash it at the men in the row below him, who duck in anticipation of it, while several others in the row above, who are not threatened, grin with delight. But by a quick, sly movement he aims at the latter and

it knocks the hats off at least half a dozen, and then a battle for the possession of the missile begins. It flies from head to head, and hand to hand, up the theatre, down the theatre, and diagonally; it sends a plug hat spinning, and brings colour into many faces, and its course is followed by shrieks of laughter, mingled with catcalls. The pursuit of it becomes fierce; but after a lapse of five minutes a whirring electric bell is heard, and the game is abandoned.

A portly gentleman enters the stage, who from the firmness of his tread and the erectness of his body might be a general reviewing his troops. He is massively built, and has a full, round face, a clipped head, and a heavy moustache. He is dressed in a fashionable frock-coat and light trousers. His hair is nearly gray, and as he strides across the stage, waiting for the applause to cease, he looks more like a general than ever. His manner somehow implies that time is very precious with him, and he talks in a rapid but rather husky voice. Time *is* precious with him; his private practice is enormous, and patients come thousands of miles to see him. It is wonderful that he finds time for the college; but, more than that, he is a voluminous writer of books on his specialty, and a famous entertainer.

He writes novels, too, just to show his literary friends, he tells them, how easy novel writing is and how vainglorious they are in making much of it. This is Surgeon-General William A. Hammond, the celebrated neurologist, lecturer on diseases of the mind and nervous system.

Then the professor of chemistry appears, Dr. R. Ogden Doremus. He is over six feet in height — a graceful man, with easy manners and a pleasant face.

Courtesy of N. Y. Tribune.

HORACE GREELEY

The left sleeve of his frock-coat is empty, and swings loosely as he bends over the table, but he manages his right arm and left armpit so cleverly that his deficiency causes him very little inconvenience. His voice is agreeable and his phrases are well chosen. From time to time he interpolates a humorous suggestion or allusion, as, in describing the various sources of lime, he exhibits an oyster shell, and regrets that it is not a half shell with a Shrewsbury on it. He speaks vivaciously, and the hour slips by very pleasantly; he bows gracefully and retires; the blackboard doors close again, and again the students lapse into babel.

Another lecturer: his hands are in his pockets; he saunters in, and you expect him to yawn. But he is one of the busiest of men; his manner belies him. A smile plays about his face, from which flows a patriarchal beard; his eyes twinkle, and his voice is pleasant. He beckons the students who are scattered, urging them to fill the front rows.

"Come down here and I'll ask you questions; it's the best thing in the world for you."

In their own vernacular, the students do not "see it"; they are not anxious to be quizzed, but after some further pressure they draw themselves together. He begins the lecture with an interrogation, and one of the audience essays an answer without premeditation. "Hold on!" cries the professor good-naturedly; "it isn't half as easy as that. I twisted it to make it interesting for you." And the proper answer is some time in forthcoming. When the answer is given, the professor adds to it, eliminates words inexact in meaning, and substitutes others precisely correct; by hints and signs he attracts a blunderer from a false conclusion to

a proper one; and, having drawn him to that point, he expands it with fluency and emphasis, as he walks to and fro across the rostrum, now beating his hand on the rail in accentuation of the syllables, then folding his arms as he sits on the corner of a table and expounds the electric and chemic laws with the bland simplicity of a gossip at the club.

He is Dr. John C. Draper, the renowned chemist, whose father, a member of the same faculty, was the first to photograph the human countenance.

The students were from all parts of the world, even from Ceylon, Siam, and South Australia. Many of the native Americans were the sons of small farmers and artisans of the Southern and Western states. They lived on four or five dollars a week in shabby boarding houses, and trudged through the winter's snow and ice to lectures and demonstrations without overcoats and in leaky boots, reading at night by the light of candles or kerosene lamps in their cold and gloomy attics. Some of the faculty were of similarly humble origin. Professor Lewis A. Sayre, for instance, had sprung from Kentucky, a raw, uncouth, unlettered boy, with not more than two or three dollars a week above his tuition fees, and no cheese to his bread. He had no time to acquire the insinuating, caressing, cooing polish of the bedside manner, and he despised it. He was loud and impetuous; a giant in figure, tempestuous and overwhelming in his heartiness outside the hospital. If you saw him coming you stopped and threw up your hands, or tucked them under your arms, or behind your back, to save them from a crushing, excruciating grasp which once learned could not be forgotten or permitted again. Yet he was at the head of his profession.

The city ended at Fifty-ninth Street. William Black described it as Paris with a touch of the backwoods; another visitor's simile was, "A savage in his war paint, showing dirt beneath his feathers, beads, and trinkets." The tunnel and the station at Forty-second Street were unfinished. The trains came in and out on the surface to and from the terminus on the site of the Madison Square Garden. Above Fifty-ninth Street on both sides of the Park spread Shantytown, reaching to Harlem and Manhattanville. Streets had been graded and paved over a wide area, through the speculations of Tweed and Company, but there were no houses on them; many people smiled and declared there never would be any houses; that the work and material had been thrown away at the impulse of a grafter's dream.

All down in the hollows, between the graded streets, thousands and thousands of acres were under cultivation by squatters, and without other inclosure to the land than the embankments formed around the hollows by the foundations of the streets. Agriculture was carried on with primitive simplicity and under a picturesqueness of condition that set an artist on the edge of desire. Many square miles were green with vegetables. You saw the gardeners with their wives and mothers bending to their work; you heard the cackling of geese, the clutter of fowls, and the squealing of pigs. The dwellings might have been blown together out of scrap heaps. Chimneys were made of old stove and drain pipes, roofs of tarpaulin, threadbare bits of carpets, and rotten canvas, where now are the palaces of multi-millionaires. Though the tenants were squatters, and understood the precariousness of their holdings, they resisted eviction at the point of the knife and the muzzles of guns.

I discovered "copy" there also. All was fish that came to my net, all grist that came to my mill. But Broadway was my gold coast, my Spanish Main, which I, the beach comber, patrolled with an open, comprehensive eye for the flotsam and jetsam unseen or misprized by others.

If we could step back into the past from to-day, the first impression of change in the city would strike through the ear: it would be of quietude; and next would be of room to spare and the absence of density and pressure, though we of that time, sufficient unto ourselves, never anticipated that the future would impute to us less bustle and less noise than its own. There were no shops east or west of Broadway above Fourteenth Street. Madison Square and Union Square were surrounded by the houses of the well-to-do, which also lined the side streets in stiff, regimental uniformity. Here and there whitish sandstone or marble was used, as in the Stewart palace, with which we reduced the stranger within the gates to humility; but it was the era of brownstone, and the "brownstone front," symbolizing elegance, respectability, and opulence, frowned down upon us, or smiled if we were friends, wherever we went. Each house was just like its neighbours; it had a high stoop and a frescoed vestibule of pseudo Arabesque design, and in spring and autumn evenings, when the warmth was premature or outrunning the season, the family assembled on the steps and, bareheaded, received callers or chatted among themselves without any prejudice against the sacrifice of privacy. Charming indeed were those stoops as one saw them in the languorous dusk and overheard the whispers and laughter of young men and groups of girls in white, butterfly dresses.

I read in the window of a shop displaying imitation brilliants, "Wear diamonds; they show you are prosperous." The motto of that generation, was "Always live in a brownstone house, and your social position will be assured."

The houses were not closed from May to October or November, as those in fashionable localities are now. The summer holidays usually began with July and ended with August, and the people went no farther than Saratoga, Long Branch, Lake George, Delaware Water Gap, Richfield Springs, or Newport. A score of bathing-houses and half-a-dozen refreshment saloons provided for the few who drifted down to the solitary white beaches of Rockaway and Coney Island. One steamer, sailing once in six weeks, sufficed for all the cabin passengers bound for the Mediterranean. Such a ship as the *Kaiserin Augusta Victoria* or the *Adriatic* could have easily accommodated more than all who went to Europe in the busiest week in the height of the seaon. We were rudimentary, not cosmopolitan, hardly metropolitan, conscious of latent power and of a future, but meanwhile quite satisfied with our achievements and progress, conceited about them indeed, and ready to pooh-pooh those visionaries who strove to increase the pace.

The ancient stages which rattled us between Fulton Ferry, South Ferry, and Twenty-third Street did not seem so very slow after all, though they took forty minutes for each journey, and we did not complain, though every minute of the forty put us through an agonizing apprehension of dislocated bones. As we landed at the ferry, a weedy, gray, melancholy old tout hailed us.

"Right up Broadway! Right up Broadway!"

I never heard him say more or less than that, and he was always there — silent but for the monotony of his cry, and lost in his inner depths. He was a veteran of the Civil War. I imagined all the details of his life without questioning him, or verifying them, and put him into a story, imitatively Dickensian, which moved me, though it may have drawn no tears from others. I pictured him dying in his attic, wasted and forsaken, and murmuring with his last breath as the celestial dawn opened, "Right up Broadway!"

Dickens led not me alone, but many older and more experienced authors — Aldrich with his "Quite So," for example — into pathos of that shallow and unconvincing sort.

Can the reader of the present time believe that in those days there was but one respectable *table d'hôte* in all the town? —"Fanny's" in University Place, where as we dined we said, "How like France!" though we had never been in France then. Delmonico's stood at the corner of Fourteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, with a bit of a lawn in front of it, on which tables were set in mild weather. English chop-houses, with sanded floors, old prints, and Toby mugs, abounded — George Browne's Green Room in the rear of old Wallack's Theatre, Farrish's in John Street, The De Soto in Bleecker Street, and the Shakespeare Inn, which you entered through a long, mysterious passage from Thirteenth Street. In winter you could see behind every bar a steaming brass or copper urn, its rim loaded with pulpy, baking apples. Gone is the savour of the apple toddy, that odorous brew in which you mixed bits of the hot fruit with boiling water, sugar, and the fragrant spirit distilled from orchards and matured in sherry casks. The scent of the orchard in blossom, and a vision of all the country

in vernal loveliness, thrilled you as that nectar touched your lips.

The theatrical profession had no clubs like The Lambs and The Players. After the play the actors gathered in the chop-houses, especially at Browne's, Browne himself being a member of Wallack's company, a fat, ruddy little Englishman who played no part truer than that of host. The fitful wind of remembrance (I borrow the significant phrase from F. B. Sanborn) has brushed them all away into the limbo of phantoms — William Davidge, Charles Fisher, John Gilbert, Harry Beckett, Charles Leclerc, and John Brougham. A biographical dictionary of the stage must be consulted if you want to learn of their triumphs.

Wallack's was the theatre of triumphs, of the new plays of H. J. Byron and T. W. Robertson, and of annual revivals of the old comedies, Sheridan's, Goldsmith's, Congreve's, Farquhar's, and Garrick's. Everybody of note in town was present on "first nights," and everybody knew everybody else. Those celebrated occasions had the aspect of family gatherings through the intimacy of the audience with one another and with the actors themselves. The actors played at the audience more than they would be allowed to do now, and they were as much welcomed for their personality as for their impersonations. Melodrama could seldom be seen on those classic boards, yet it was at Wallack's that Dion Boucicault gave the first performance of "The Shaugraun." What a red-letter night that was — the house overflowing, the interest and the merriment climbing and growing till our limp, spent bodies ached!

"What have you got to say for yourself, Con?" the stern, accusing priest asks that most delightful of vaga-

bonds, and he, hanging his tousled head, confesses, "Divil a word, your riverence." So when we summoned Boucicault before the curtain, bawling at him in our transports, calling for a speech and for a long time making a speech impossible, he, clothed in the shreds and patches of the part, responded in the sweet, endearing brogue which he could never get rid of, though he believed he left it behind him at the stage door, quoting the same lines, and putting the audience in the place of the priest and himself in the place of the culprit.

"Shun the theatre. It is the gate of hell!" a Puritanical aunt of mine used to warn me in my earlier boyhood. If she could have looked into that sea of happy faces, heard those peals of guileless laughter, and known how such pleasures abate the rancours of this tough world her fanaticism must have yielded.

It is not impossible that a supercilious youth of the twentieth century, could he see us as we were in the seventies, would think us discreditably behindhand and say that he had no use for "hayseeds." We talked of rapid transit less confidently than people talk now of commercial aviation and of harnessing the winds and the tides. Those who had been in London hoped that some day we might have something like the old underground railway of that city, and would have accounted it a boon despite its general nastiness. A glimmer of what the womb of the future might produce came from an experimental length of a pneumatic line under Broadway near the Astor House.

You went down a few stairs and entered from a platform a roomy, circular car, seated in which you and a dozen other venturous passengers were drawn a hundred yards or so, and then hauled back into the station.

It should have been thrilling: we expected to learn from it the sensations of Zaza, "the human cannon-ball," at the moment her showman, Farini, fired her out of a gun, which though suspiciously like a "quaker" was of terrific calibre, as any gun must have been to receive within its bore a plump young lady dressed in a spangled bodice and pink tights. A puff, a flash, and out the damsel shot, kissing her fingers as she rebounded in the netting below the smoking muzzle. The velocity of her emergence was so low that our suspense reacted in a little disappointment. Our journey on the pneumatic also ended tamely without justifying our agitated anticipations. It was too slow, too smooth, too easy. We felt like the king of France marching up a hill and down again, and we regretted the ten cents the experiment cost us. The pneumatic never got beyond the experimental length, and was as dubious as the performance of Zaza herself.

IV

A HANDY MAN OF LITERATURE

A YOUTH matures in a newspaper office faster than in any other profession, and he cannot be there for a year or two, if he has sufficient aptitude to lift himself above the routine of the stenographer or the vagabondage of the cub reporter, without acquiring and developing a certain prudence and precision of expression and a capacity for fitting material to any dimensions prescribed for it by those in authority. He may have the desire of the moth for the star; a longing to be literary, rather than journalistic; a longing to shape his own style on the model of some favourite author, or half a dozen favourite authors; a longing to drape himself in all the ornaments of rhetoric and imagination, and to give free rein to an individuality trying to find itself; but these are liberties he dare not take while he is subject to the spirit of impersonality and fixed standards which dominate a serious newspaper.

That spirit imposes restraints which preachers and lawyers can safely ignore: their arguments are not impaired by the embellishments of rhetoric, or by the excursions of an imagination which borrows images and flowers of speech from earth and heaven, but if either sermon or the appeal to the court were repeated in the form of an editorial, word for word, as it was spoken, eloquent as it might be, every other editor would think that the editor who sanctioned it must have gone mad.

The editorial must be logical, consistent, and, above all, concise. Wit and satire in crisp phrases it may have, the more the better; it must be lucid, direct, unambiguous, and undelayed by verbosity; the art of it is in verbal thrift, not in luxuriance of diction, and it must have the appearance of completeness and finality, though very likely the clock has struck and the measure been filled while the writer of it has been only in the middle of the matter he could have put into it but for the limitations of space.

I never read the editorial pages of clean and responsible newspapers without admiring the knowledge, the unity of style, and the general excellence of craftsmanship visible in the articles which, inevitably prepared in a heat, give no signs of hurry. The homogeneity of form is a wonder in itself. Though different hands are employed they work in one fashion, and the whole page has the effect of having been moulded by one man, whose material might have been a liquid pouring out of one tap and stopping automatically, after filling to the brim vessels of various sizes and one label, without overflowing or wasting a drop, Whether he is young or old the individual disappears in the collective spirit of "the paper," with the traditions and usages of which he is obliged to conform whatever his idiosyncrasies may be.

"The paper!" The staff speak of it as of omnipotence, of something higher than anything else in the world, and of a supernal power which requires on all occasions instant obedience and complete self-effacement. They coalesce in it like nebulæ drawn into a planet.

So, if he is wise, the novice quickly falls into the groove and fills his pint pot of paragraphs as neatly as he can in the hope that by and by the larger measure may be

granted to him. His sprigs of verse wither in an album; the eagle wings of imagination that were to bear him heavenward are clipped; he picks up his food, scraping the ground which has no other recommendation than its stability.

When my eyes were again able to front the sun after a threatening blindness my oculist advised me against going back to night work, and I declared my intention of trying the career of a free lance, that is, of writing books and articles for the magazines, and living on what I could earn in that way. I remember as though I had seen it yesterday the dubiety which creased Doctor Holland's brow when I told him. Who knows that name now? The mention of it hardly stirs an echo. Do the books it was attached to sell now? or are they only to be found on the back shelves of libraries, and in the old homesteads which received them with eagerness and delight as they came out in editions of thousands? Nobody looked puzzled then if you spoke of J. G. Holland or of "Timothy Titcomb," his pseudonym; they were names on every lip, not less celebrated than Cooper's, Dickens's, Thackeray's or Josh Billings's, and more familiar than Mark Twain's, for he had not yet persuaded us that it was necessary for us to laugh every time he poked us in the ribs. Very proper were the books which bore them, full of sugar-coated precepts, not unsuitable for Sunday reading, nor acid in their moralities, which did not hide the face of God in a mask of scowls, but revealed it in the smiles of genuine humour. In some ways they reflected the appearance of the author, a tall, distinguished, magisterial man of as much suavity as dignity, who took a parental interest in all the young people he met, so true indeed an interest in

those who were nearest to him that he admitted them to all the advantages of partnership in the magazine he had founded, the first *Scribner's Monthly*, which is now the *Century*.

"But it is impossible to live by magazine work alone, my dear boy. There is not a man in America who is doing it, or who can do it. There are not enough magazines. We all have to depend on private means, or on the salary of some regular position. Go back to the *Tribune* or some other newspaper. Then you will be able to pay your way, and escape temptation, the horrors of debt, and all the misery of uncertainty, yes, and of destitution. They will wreck you, take my word for it, if you persist in your present intention."

He meant well, but I was foolhardy, and I did not shiver or throw up my hands under the cold water of his advice.

A young fellow, eager, slight, nervous, and endearing, with dark, deep, swimming eyes, sat on the other side of the desk and while he listened to his chief threw sympathetic glances at me. I never saw gentler eyes than those were: their glow was enveloping, it warmed by the courage and the inspiration it communicated. That was Richard Watson Gilder, the assistant editor, and as he saw me to the door he clasped my hand, and whispered, "Try us with something. I hope you will hit us right in the bull's-eye."

I did hit them in the bull's-eye almost immediately afterward and often again, if mere acceptance is to be reckoned as marksmanship, during all the years of my adventures as a "beach comber," not now of paragraphs and slender columns, but of serviceable material for magazines.

The flood of low-priced periodicals which now tides many a not quite seaworthy craft — some privateers also — over the shallows, had not risen. Respectability in the Victorian sense of starch prevailed. We handled everything with kid gloves, though our coats might be shabby and our linen frayed, and we shaped our lips to "prunes," "prisms," and "propriety." We might be dull, but dulness was more excusable than vulgarity. We worked not with the axe on giant trees, making the splinters fly and our muscles bulge, but whittled and pared with pocket knives. Originality was not encouraged. The rake of the "muck-raker," the language of the Bowery and the frontier, the stories flung out of a red heat, without thought of their consequences on domestic proprieties and on the sensibilities of polite society, stories scornful of syntax and orderliness of dress, did not profane the unsullied pages of those unsophisticated days. No doubt there were slimy places at our very doors, but we shut our eyes to them or hoodwinked them, and let the scavenger attend to them out of our sight and out of the reach of our nostrils.

"Not in the New York *Ledger!*"

When Robert Bonner once threw a story back to its author and was asked why he rejected it he replied, "Because cousins marry in it."

"But don't cousins marry in real life, Mr. Bonner?"

"That may be, but never in the New York *Ledger.*"

That illustrates the primness which circumscribed us. Hardy, Wells, and Eden Phillpotts had not cleared the horizon. The off-hand colloquialism which began with Kipling and runs riot in his imitators was not permitted. The standard which shackled us was that of a straight-laced mother, who, having morality as the first consider-

RICHARD WATSON GILDER

ation, becomes after that solicitous for a style of ambling ease, unimpeded by any complexities of thought or phrase which might delay the "instruction and the entertainment"— thus she combined the words — of the dear children.

My first article in *Harper's* was on "Jack Ashore." It exposed the wrongs of the most defenceless people in the world, but it could scarcely have been classed as "muck-raking."

How antiquated they look, those magazines of the early seventies with all their decorum, their sober articles on science and travel, and their funny little wood-engravings! The cherubs who blow bubbles on the old cover of *Harper's Monthly* were already middle-aged and should have had some clothing to save the readers' blushes. The same editor sits now in the same chair in the same cubical that he occupied when I climbed the spiral stairway to the editorial rooms to see him then. He celebrated his seventieth birthday five years ago, and soon afterward he — Henry Mills Alden — wrote to me: "The world goes well with me — better than I ever hoped. I could only wish for you or for any other friend, that his satisfaction with earthly life be as full as mine." A dreamer and a mystic, he would rather talk to you of metaphysics than of manuscripts; a born philosopher, diverted by the pressure of circumstances from the lore he preferred, he would for choice expound in a low voice the Eleusinian mysteries with his head wreathed in smoke from his pipe rather than hasten to dispel *your* mystery as to the fate of the contribution you had submitted to him last week or the week before. He was very patient with his young contributors, very eager for their success, and when he was compelled to

hand a manuscript back to any of them I am sure it wrung him. He had been through the mill, and he told me of an experience he had had with Guernsey, his predecessor.

"Yes, we'll take it," Guernsey had said of a page-long poem which Alden had offered, and forthwith Guernsey had filled a voucher and passed it on to him. It was a thrifty, porridge-eating time in literature for both editors and authors, and though Alden had not expected much the figures on the voucher were smaller.

"Why, Alden, you look disappointed."

"I am — a little."

"What did you expect?"

"Well, I thought it might be worth ten dollars."

The sum called for by the voucher was five.

"Very well; we want to be generous. We'll split the difference and make it seven fifty."

If a poem equal in merit to that were offered to him to-day, I venture to say Alden would pay at least fifty and perhaps a hundred for it. The wages of prose and verse have improved.

Faces and methods have changed, but I believe the old Harper building, like Alden's sanctum, is just the same now as it was then. Then the founders of the house were alive, a remarkable family of strong, wholesome, conservative, and efficient-looking men of a solid English type that has become almost, if not quite, extinct in the modern business world. A friend of mine who was associated with them for many years described to me the examination he passed when he applied for employment in a literary capacity. His testimonials having been scrutinized, he was questioned as to his habits.

"You smoke?"

"Very little."

"You drink ?"

"Only in moderation."

"You gamble?"

"Never."

"Come, come! Then what is your vice? Every man must have one. Out with it!"

Galahad himself would have been cornered in such an interrogation.

They were hospitable, too, in an old-fashioned way, and from the bustle of the publishing floor, stacked to the ceiling with books and papers, resonant under the wheels of trucks and the tramp of employees, they used to take their friends, customers, and favourite authors into an inner room of quiet luxury, decorated by the artists of their staff, and offer them the choice of various decanters.

Only malfeasance or inefficiency dislodged a man from his berth. The old cashier, Demorest, had been there time out of mind — a gruff old fellow, who glared from behind his grille, and paid out money grudgingly, as though it were being thrown away. I took my vouchers to him in dread of that damning, transfixing glance of his, which implied that while literature might be all right as a manufactured product, the creatures who produced it were as leeches boring into the props and drawing the sap out of the foundations of the business.

When the amount called for was fifty dollars he made me feel that it was unconscionable; when it increased to a hundred he held the voucher at close range and distant, incredible at both, and examined it for what seemed to be an hour, examined it and re-examined it, screwing his eyes at me and it bitterly; and when, one

happy and memorable day, the amount for a special service rose to two hundred dollars, his disapprobation overwhelmed both of us. He held the slip of paper first at arm's length, then brushed it against his nose; groaned, leaned back in his stool, slowly opened the receipt book and noisily closed it, and before he suspiciously handed out the money came from behind the grille and surveyed me from head to foot, snorting as he did so, with the effect of making me half believe that in some way I had perpetrated a fraud. But it was better to risk that bloodhound of the treasury, growling and straining his leash, than to return down the iron stairway, ascended buoyantly, descended with heavy feet, a heavy heart, and pocket bulging with a rejected manuscript instead of dollars.

Those descents sometimes reminded me of a nightmare of my childhood. A Calvinistic nurse had pictured for me the place all bad boys go to. It was down a wide, dark stairway, and as you went deeper and deeper with trembling legs, wishing to run back but quite unable to do it, you grew warmer and warmer, hotter and hotter, until you were bathed in perspiration. Then a smell of sulphur stifled you, and the red reflections of an enormous fire stained the walls, the ceiling, and the steps you were treading on. A few steps more, and you, struggling and shrieking, reached the biggest kitchen you had ever seen, and a gleeful imp sprang at you and pushed you against the prongs of a fork held by a huge creature resembling a scarlet goat, who dropped you on a broiler and grilled you while the imp danced and laughed, until you were sure you were very much overdone. And he cooked you and cooked and cooked you as a real cook does a chop or a steak when she is talking to the grocer's boy or the policeman.

The same nurse once touched my bare finger with a lighted match, and begged me to remember how very painful flames all over the body must be if so slight a scorch as that could hurt so much. By this time, and by her own experience, she has probably proved, for weal or woe, her little experiment on me.

You could have counted on the fingers of one hand all the periodicals in New York that paid a living wage. They were *Harper's*, *Scribner's Monthly*, *Appleton's Journal*, *Hearth and Home*, and the *Galaxy*, which, unillustrated, was in a literary way the most brilliant of them all. I can praise the *Galaxy*, and my old friends, its editors, Colonel William Church and John Lillie, without fearing reproach or challenge, since I never burdened them with a line.

Appleton's was a neat, dignified small quarto, full of pleasant little essays, edited by Oliver Bell Bunce, the literary adviser of the publishers, to whom he suggested many highly successful books, among them "Picturesque America" and "Picturesque Europe," which, lying under the family Bible, or near it, still adorn, I suppose, not a few musty chromo-hung and horsehaired country parlours.

Your first meeting with him was likely to be as terrifying as the bark of Demorest. A lean, stooping, gray-visaged man, intellectual looking, spruce in attire, quick in movement, imperious in manner, he disconcerted you by the flash of his eyes, and then dashed your manuscript on the desk before him, flattening it with resounding blows of both hands if it were rolled, hunching his shoulders, and working his mouth as a dog does while he stiffens himself for an attack. But there was no bite to Bunce. All those menacing demonstrations were

but a necessary defence against the impulses which, unguarded, would have embarrassed him through too many indiscretions of sympathy and generosity. He had the tenderest of hearts under that alarming demeanour, as you were likely to discover before even your first meeting with him ended.

I do not mean that he subsided into the purring sort of man, into blandishments and oily acquiescences. He was always positive and gesticulatory, full of affirmations and postulates, of views taken at a tangent and often taken merely to provoke discussion. He liked to argue on art and literature, starting invariably with an emphatic "I affirm," and what he affirmed was so different from the opinions of others that conversation with him never missed being breezy; sometimes it whirled in the vortex of a tempest.

Some of his affirmations were gathered in a book of his called "Bachelor Bluff." His language, whether spoken or written, was as vigorous and stimulating as his ideas were original. Frequently you might not agree with him, but you were never disinclined to listen to the dogmas and paradoxes he peppered you with from his rapid-fire battery. Like most of us, he had suppressed his ambitions, which had budded at the outset in a five-act tragedy, and losing his hold on the skirts of the classic mantle — what a slippery robe it is!— had resigned himself undaunted to the thorns of the editorial chair and the small satisfactions of the book-making. His greatest success, measured by circulation, was a little volume of "Don'ts," a manual of social and moral prohibitions, which had a vogue equal to that of "Helen's Babies" or "Wee Macgregor," and for a long time the title endured as a popular catchword, like Punch's

"don't" to people about to marry. The trivialities of which we are not proud often enough please the public taste much better than our finer, loftier efforts.

Every Sunday evening he and Mrs. Bunce, assisted by their clever and pretty daughters, opened their house in Twenty-first Street for a late supper, and hither came artists and authors, big and little, those who had won their spurs, and those who were unmounted and uncommissioned. Young painters who had been forced to abandon their dreams of glorious canvases hung on the line at the Salon, for the sake of the bread and cheese procurable by illustrations, and young authors who, humbly paying their way by fifteen and twenty dollar articles on cabbages, chimney-sweeps, organ-grinders, and marionettes, had in their heads the ferment of epics, novels, and plays, were as welcome in that generous house as any of the celebrities who were constantly present. As I recall those boys and the sacrifice of their desires and perhaps of their natural abilities, a protest clamours for utterance. Oh, the inexorable "pressure of circumstances!" How it binds and suffocates! How it retards, cripples, and humiliates the youth of the twin professions and makes artisans of them instead of artists!

If I mention some of the celebrities who were there, it is probable that their names will be meaningless and the reason of their distinction unperceived by readers under fifty. Who were the two Cary sisters? I may be asked. Who were Richard Henry Stoddard, Arthur Quartley, Swain Gifford, F. E. Church, Walter Shirlaw, Charles Warren Stoddard, Edgar Fawcett, Albert Falvey Webster, William Henry Bishop, and Frederick Dielman? Only a few like Stedman, Winslow Homer,

Thomas Moran, and E. A. Abbey are recalled without a dip into reference books; the front sheet of the roll is visible while it is held in place by a clasp; those below have sprung back out of sight and it is a dusty job to haul them down again.

I, like cleverer men, yielded to that irresistible pressure. Could I have chosen I would have given all my time to the writing of stories, novels, and plays, to purely literary effort, but I was in need of immediate returns. The fiction of a beginner is always a speculative and hazardous offering in the market; I could not do without an assured income. The cost of my ransom from the dragon was the renunciation of the imagination, except as a game of solitaire in leisure hours, in hours stolen from sleep. What I had learned during my apprenticeship under Mr. Bowles and in the *Tribune* office now put me on my feet. I had acquired the journalistic knack of writing evenly, discreetly, and without slopping over; of cutting and fitting to measurements like a carpenter, a tailor, or a shoemaker; of always being passable, in a workman-like way, if nothing more. I could be trusted with commissions. All I had to do was to find subjects which the editors approved of, and no questions followed as to my ability to turn out the given number of words — five thousand or six thousand — with the "neatness and despatch" appealing from shop windows. I was fertile in subjects, and that was as important to success as the precision and the simplicity of style which I fell into. The ability to dovetail words and sentences in lucid paragraphs and pages is not enough in itself. You must also be able to hit on topics which your editor has not already done, which accord with his policy, which he believes will suit his

public. He counts on you for that, and I think it is a natural gift, an individual instinct, one of the few things which cannot be taught or learned.

Many years later when I had become an editor I proposed a subject to Sir Edwin Arnold which I confessed to him seemed to be out of his line, and as he accepted it he sighed, "I am ashamed to say that after all my years in the office of the *Daily Telegraph* I can write on any subject offered to me."

My own range, not so universal as his, nor exploited with his erudition or depicted with his vividness, comprised a superficial area absurdly disproportionate to the depth of its shallow soil. It covered town and country, slums and the resorts of fashion, art and industry, the sea and navies, attics and housetops, the medical profession, and cowboys; it extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific, for much of it was topographical: an isthmus of it opened a way to England and the Continent. While I was in the midst of it Richard Henry Stoddard, finer as a poet than judicious as a critic, playfully dubbed me the "Briareus of the Press"— the Titan of the fifty heads and the hundred hands. If he meant that, it was a far-fetched compliment. Though it smeared the lips with honey, it recalled the sting of Tennyson's fling at Bulwer Lytton. Not an interesting monstrosity like Briareus, I was but a filler of bottles from a tap of constant supply.

All the while cravings for higher things were murmuring and beating against the bars of the cage, and sometimes they got half way out into the sunlight and struggled to be free. Imagination rebels against renunciation; you may renounce it, but it will not abide by any contract you make for it. Why repine? "Who

hath despised the day of small things?" The freedom of the woods offers no shelter from the hardships of the weather, and dreams may lose their charm if they are transmuted into actualities; they are not meant for earth, and substantiated they may be as difficult as an angel would find her wings every time she was asked to "step lively," or "move up in front," in an overcrowded street car.

The pleasantest incidents in the work were the journeys made in company with the illustrators of the articles — with E. A. Abbey, C. S. Reinhart, Howard Pyle, Granville Perkins, E. H. Garrett, and Harry Fenn. We were light-hearted boys then, and while our spirits were high enough under ordinary circumstances, any mishap or particular hardship, hunger, fatigue, the loss of sleep, or strange bedfellows at once raised them. Everybody predicted fame for Abbey, for he had already shown his genius in his illustrations of "The Quiet Life" and "Old Songs." Humour sparkled in his dark eyes; he scorned convention. There was something elfish in him. You might be walking and talking with him, the "Ab," of those days, and suddenly to your amazement and the amazement of any one else in sight, he would drop you to dance a double shuffle in the middle of the road, with all the confident flourishes of a stage darkey. And when he has been amused I have seen him roll off his feet in uncontrollable laughter, and bury his head in the cushions of a chair or sofa, while his plump little body rocked and heaved. A Royal Academician now, he was authorized to paint the picture of the coronation of King Edward, who, like Queen Alexandra, became one of his admirers. As the sittings progressed, the King praised this and that, and seemed to be particularly

pleased with the conspicuousness of one of his royal legs among all the details of that gorgeous pageant. The other leg was hidden by his robes and the robes of prelates and peers.

"Splendid, Abbey!" said His Majesty, "and do you know? I think you had better show both legs. Then it will be perfect."

Who could have been so churlish as to flout the wish of so amiable a monarch as King Edward? Not Abbey, and though that apparently trifling change involved many others, he, of course, consented.

A city's water front abounds with material for pictures and descriptions, and I had often been attracted by the mixture of domestic life and commerce to be observed among the fleets of canal boats moored at Whitehall. Abbey and I decided on a trip in one of them, and spent two weeks in her, gliding up the Hudson and through the canal in the most restful and beguiling way. She was unprepared for passengers, but, fully content, we shared the hutch of her captain and his daughter — a very nice girl, by the way — under the tiller, and broke the journey and picked strawberries at their home, a comfortable, prosperous farm house on the very banks of the canal at Oneida. Afterward the Tile Club followed our example, and received the credit for the revival of an outgrown means of transit which properly belonged to us.

The "canallers" are better than the reputation they have with those who do not know them. Their boats are often their only homes, and their families are born and reared in them. A boat comes along with a hard-worked woman in a rocking-chair at the stern, a wild lily in a tumbler of water on a common box, which

serves as a work table; and, in an enclosure of rope and wood, like a sheep pen, on the cabin roof, children are playing, and we see a young woman pressing a tame robin to her breast, and feeding it at the end of her finger. Hour after hour we glide as if through air, with less perceptible motion than even the flutter of wings, and all the beauty of the valley of the Mohawk is silently opened before us. As the stars gleam out, myriads of fireflies emulate them, and flash across the oily surface of the stream. Each boat carries a brilliant lantern in the bow, which disperses a circle of yellow light on the watery track ahead. The tow-lines dip occasionally with a musical thrill, and you hear the steady thud of the horses' hoofs on the ground, or the low cry of the driver as he urges them forward. At the stern the helmsman sings till a lock engages him. His voice then deepens. "Lock be-l-o-o-w!" he calls to his mate; "ste-a-dy, ste-a-dy!" to the driver. There is a momentary clatter of feet upon the deck; we rise smoothly to the new level; the lock lights fade; and we are travelling softly toward the amber morning.

Howard Pyle and I drove over the old national pike from Frederick, Maryland, to West Virginia, which a century ago was the great highway of coaches, wagons, and horsemen between the East and West. It was the route of Jackson, Clay, Harrison, Taylor, Polk, Calhoun, Davy Crockett, and other celebrities, to Baltimore and Washington. An octogenarian told us that he had seen Clay thrown from a coach into a heap of soft limestone near the Pennsylvania border. Clay was very witty and very courteous. "He bowed to everybody who bowed to him." As soon as he recovered from the shock he relighted his cigar, and smiled. "This, gentle-

men," he said, bowing to the onlookers, "is indeed a case of mixing the Clay of Kentucky with the limestone of Pennsylvania."

There were sixteen gayly painted coaches each way a day; the cattle and sheep were never out of sight; the canvas-covered wagons were drawn by six or twelve horses with bows of bells over their collars; some families went by in private vehicles; and while most of the travellers were unostentatious, a few had splendid equipages, and employed outriders. Some of the passes through the Alleghanies are nearly as precipitous as the Sierra Nevada. Within a mile of the road the country was a wilderness.

When Pyle and I drove over the pike thirty-three years ago blacksnakes, moccasins, and copperheads had grown so unused to the sight of man that they lay in the sun unconcerned while we passed. The old taverns were crumbling, the old villages around the taverns were asleep. The pervading scent of pines seems to still cling to my clothes, and I remember the voices of whip-poor-wills, owls, and catamounts which shivered through the air as night fell in purple and gold upon the endless ridges and peaks of the Alleghanies, and sank the gorges into unfathomable pits, one of which is called the Shades of Death. I remember, too, the pretty maid at the old toll-house, who had no change for the coin we gave her, and who went calling across the pasture, "Oh, mother! Oh, mother!" so loudly that all the mountains picked it up and bleated, "Oh, mother! Oh, mother!" as from a nursery swarming with infant Titans.

The fee I received for one of those outings was less than I had looked for, but the editor did not offer, as in Al-

den's case, to "split the difference" between my expectations and his estimate of value. All he said was, "Why, after all that pleasure we ought not to pay you anything. You ought to pay us for giving you such an opportunity." I did not see it in that way then, but could I repeat those journeys in the same company and in the same joyous spirits, I would not hesitate to put my hand into my pocket as deeply and as readily as it would go.

At the end of ten years of free-lancing I had overstocked the market, the inevitable consequence which Doctor Holland had foreseen when there was only one periodical to every twelve or more which exist now. *Harper's* had accepted between forty and fifty long articles of mine, and *Scribner's Monthly* and the *Century* nearly as many. Some months I had taken the leading place in four magazines at once, and yet with all my industry and versatility — I can claim those merits — I had not been able at the best to make more than between fifteen hundred and two thousand dollars in any one year. What was I to do now? I did not care to return to daily journalism. The "pressure of circumstances" was tightening on me again. I was glumly smoking and woolgathering on a raw, gray February morning in lodgings opposite the Astor Library — in one of those austere, granite, colonnaded houses under the porticoes of which the ancient stoics might have gathered in the intangible armour of their philosophy. The fire in the grate would not burn, sleet and snow were strumming against the windows. Nothing would go. It was a morning of restlessness, perplexities, and forebodings. I picked up books, letters, and papers, glanced at them and dropped them. Then a stranger knocked at my door.

This may sound like the slow music of a melodrama; it may look like a stage scene carefully devised for its effect on the reader's sentiment. Every detail is true, except that before knocking on my door the stranger had sent up his card, which bore a name I did not know. It was Providence personified in a well-dressed, polite young man from Boston.

Providence has many disguises, and is often belated, but how often in life she steps in at the eleventh hour and saves the situation by providing bread for the starving and a rescuing hand for the drowning! Every resource is at an end, and we resign ourselves to fate; not a crumb remains and hardly a breath; the fifty-eighth minute is on the edge of the fifty-ninth; the curtain is shutting down on the last ray of light, when this angel of compassion appears and restores us. I think that those of us who have endured the stings and arrows of misfortune, in the tight and bristling corners some of us know, can all recall some moment of crisis when the strangling hag of despair has had us at our last gasp, and Providence has intervened with saving grace, and left us in such bewilderment over our salvation that we have not had a voice to thank her, nor fully comprehended the miracle until it has loomed in retrospect from the distance of years.

"Would I come on to Boston and see Mr. Ford?" That was what the messenger said. I had been a contributor to the *Youth's Companion* since my seventeenth year, and already knew Mr. Ford well, a man of the kindliest nature and the highest principles. He had acquired the *Companion* while it was a very small and very restricted thing, and was making it by leaps and bounds what it has been ever since — an educative power

over children and adults in American families. When I had submitted my boyish essays to him he had read them in the most obliging way, while I waited. I used to watch his hands anxiously as he read. If, as he neared the last sheet, he passed the manuscript from right to left I knew it was to be accepted, for then the right would reach into his waistcoat pocket and fetch out five dollars for me.

Within twenty-four hours of that knock on my door I went to Boston and became a member of his staff, beginning at once the service which has lasted thirty years, and which I hope has been as useful to the proprietors as it has been pleasant to me.

A few years later I met Allan Thorndike Rice, who had recently bought the *North American Review* for a song. A man of means, birth, culture, and high ambition, he had happened to call, by chance, on the late James R. Osgood, who was publishing the *Review* in Boston.

"Why don't you buy it?" Osgood had said to him, jokingly as he thought, when Rice spoke of his literary aspirations.

"The *Review?* Is the *Review* for sale? Let me think it over."

"There's no time to think it over. We shall not issue another number. Unless you take hold to-day it will expire to-morrow."

For a few thousand dollars Mr. Rice had purchased it and, investing a part of his ample wealth in it, had resuscitated it with brilliant results. He was new at editorship, but adaptable and fertile in ideas, and intimate with many distinguished people, statesmen diplomats, and others, who were serviceable to him. Lawrence Oliphant, whose talents verged on genius,

also lent a hand in writing for him and in procuring foreign contributors. There are not many stories in literature sadder or less explicable than poor Oliphant's. He was well connected, a gentleman and a scholar, a favourite in society, whose books, like his conversation, sparkled with wit and dewy freshness —"Altiora Peto," for example. An idealist, too, and soon afterward, to everybody's amazement, he fell under the thrall of a religio-socialistic experiment in California; burned all his ships behind him; surrendered his identity and what property he had to the phalanstery; ceased to communicate with his former friends, and was seen peddling fruit in San Francisco.

Allan Thorndike Rice also was an unusually fascinating man to those for whom he cared, very handsome, intellectual, and genial and confiding, if he were drawn to you.

I called on him in a dudgeon to see why he had not answered a letter of mine, sent weeks before in which I had proposed an article for the *Review*. He received me with so much apologetic cordiality that my pique at his previous dilatoriness disappeared in the instant.

"Of course I want that article. How soon can you let me have it?" he said, adding, "And I want you."

That was another surprise, and we talked it over at one of the luncheons he was always giving at Delmonico's. He had just been appointed minister extraordinary and envoy plenipotentiary to St. Petersburg, and he made a contract with me to take editorial charge of the *Review* during his absence, subject, of course, to his direction and supervision from that difficult distance, and without breaking or modifying my entirely agreeable relations with Mr. Ford, in Boston. All his preparations were made; final instructions were given; he left the office

with me one evening and after we had dined together he said in his kindly way, as we parted: "You look tired. Go to bed early. Here is a prescription for something my doctor gave me which will make you sleep."

He never returned to the office. A day or two before the day fixed for his departure he died in the prime of life at the very threshold of a career which, had he not been cut off so ruthlessly and unnecessarily, would undoubtedly have carried him to enduring eminence.

The property passed to his friend, Lloyd Bryce, and under him I served the *Review* for eight years, most of the time as managing editor, and, toward the close, when my double burden was breaking me down, as associate editor. I shrink from boasting, and, like many another editor, I have always been content to work behind a screen, but some of the things I achieved for the *Review* are of more than personal interest, as, for example, the discussion I arranged between Mr. Gladstone, Cardinal Manning, and Robert Ingersoll on the subject of Faith, and the later controversy on Home Rule in which I entangled, not without a little strategy — and perhaps I ought to be ashamed of it — Mr. Gladstone, while he was prime minister, with Mr. Balfour, the late Duke of Argyll, and other foemen worthy of his steel. Of those tournaments I may give fuller detail farther on.

V

A CORNER OF BOHEMIA

THIRTY-FIVE years ago all of us who gathered at Oscar's, opposite the old Academy of Design, in Fourth Avenue, were struggling in literature or art. It was a quiet and decent place, and other customers left us to ourselves. Each of us had his own seat at the round-table, and there we sat good-humouredly, in clouds of the "infinite tobacco," which Carlyle attributed to Tennyson, with much chaff blowing between us, the flapping of the wings of ambitions that began better than they ended, and a sufficiency of reciprocal admiration, saved by ridicule before it could cloy or spoil. We all thought we were doing or going to do surpassing things which would make the world hold its breath. We were boyishly extravagant and inflated, and, as the doors closed on us, Olympian.

For us they closed till the next night. We were never there in the daytime. To us Oscar's was like Thackeray's "Back Kitchen" or his "Haunt," which vanished at the approach of daybreak — the door, the house, the bar, the waiter, Oscar himself, and all. One obligation remained, however, and that required one of us to see Jack M—— home. He was the incorrigible, unescapable dependent of the fraternity, a handsome young poet from Belfast. He could write well enough to be accepted by the *Century* and *Harper's*, but he was hopelessly indolent and unconscionable. Perhaps some of his verses

linger in the anthologies; the best of them ought not to disappear. Few are left who remember him at all, or, I might say, who remember any of us. Exasperating as he was, a later and smaller Villon, a lesser Burns, another Savage, or a Branwell Brontë, wanton and beyond redemption, we put up with him for his talents and his smile, vowing time and again that we would have no more of him, and then, after a momentary coolness, restoring him to his old footing. We used all our ingenuity and persuasion to keep him at work, which might easily have been done; we got "jobs" for him, commissions for stories, articles, and verse, but it was in vain.

The late W. M. Laffan, a struggler like the rest of us then, not the magnate he became as a colleague of Mr. Morgan and editor of the *Sun*, succeeded when the rest of us had failed, by a strategem of Hebraic ruthlessness.

He called on him at his dingy lodgings early in the morning, knowing that the sluggard would still be abed.

"I've got a job for you, Jack, and see here! you are not going to leave this room, my boy, till it's finished."

He explained what it was, and, after seeing that pen, paper, and ink were on the table, walked off with the poet's only pair of trousers under his arm. In the evening he came back and, receiving the manuscript, returned the trousers, coercion triumphing when no other form of compulsion would have availed.

I am reminded of a story that used to be told by Richard Watson Gilder. When the old *Scribner's Monthly* was started, somewhere near Bleecker Street and Broadway, and he was its assistant editor, Frank R. Stockton, not yet celebrated by the "Rudder Grange"

stories, had a subordinate place in the same office. They sat, I think, face to face. Gilder had just written some verses on the hardships of the poet's lot, the refrain of which was, "What the poet wants is bread," and with the excusable vanity of youth he turned eagerly to the newspapers every morning to see how often it had been quoted and what had been said of it. He saw Stockton watching him one day in that detached, disinterested, almost lugubrious way of his which might melt into a smile but rarely if ever got as far in levity as laughter. The gravity of the humourist's manner, whether it is deliberate and methodical or temperamental and unconscious, serves his purpose well. It has the effect of the low light which prepares the stage for the effulgence of the transformation scene. Bret Harte often spoiled his stories as he told them in his lectures and conversation by laughing himself, before his audiences had time to. Stockton could hold himself as an image of conventual austerity during the mirth he communicated to his listeners; in the height of it he sat impassive or with a no more explicit betrayal of emotion than a look of mild surprise. He did not even chuckle or gurgle as Mark Twain did.

Gilder found what he was looking for. There was the poem, and, as I daresay other young poets do as often as their verses turn up, he read it once more. Was it not Samuel Rogers who said that he never met Wordsworth in a friend's library that he was not looking into one of his own works?

Gilder discovered what he thought was a misprint. "What the poet wants is bread" had become "What the poet wants is cheese," at the end of every stanza. He had to laugh and call Stockton's attention to it, but Stockton did not seem to see the fun of it. A closer

examination showed that "bread" had been cut out and "cheese," neatly done with a pen in close imitation of the type, gummed in — by the apparently guileless Stockton, of course.

This has nothing to do with "Jack" except that bread alone did not satisfy him, and he would leave us whenever he could procure cheese elsewhere. He pressed me for a loan late one afternoon when my purse was empty, as it often was in those days.

"You could get it," he said reproachfully, with unlimited assurance and impudence, in answer to my explanation. His need was more than ordinary; he was in the sorest straits; unless he could get some money instantly disaster must crush him, and I would be responsible. There was no doubt about that — I would be the delinquent. He convinced me that I was hard-hearted, and made me ashamed of myself, and at last wheedled my watch out of my pocket and disappeared with it in the direction of the nearest pawnbroker, where I recovered it the next day.

That evening I changed my usual restaurant for another, which was seldom visited by us, and there I discovered the rogue and the reason of his exigency. There he was in the highest spirits, as glossy and vivacious as he could be, with a bleached and bedecked Light o' Love, displaying her charms and giggling, opposite to him, and between them, instead of the rasping *vin ordinaire* of the place, a bottle of the Amontillado, which I liked but could seldom afford.

Another night Edgar Fawcett and I were parting from him in Union Square, a cold, drizzling night, when the wind whistled round the corners and the pelting rain made us turn up the collars of our overcoats. He was

out of sorts and doleful. What was the matter? He paused before a letter box, and drew out of a pocket a bundle of letters ready for the post. They were to his friends at home, he explained, the last letters he would ever write, for he had resolved to take Time by the forelock and defy Fate, the Fate that had tortured him all his days, and we might take what comfort we could in the knowledge that in one of them to a relative who would see to it were full particulars of every dollar he owed to us and to others. All should be repaid, and he relieved from the burden of life. Not expecting him to carry out his threat, we chaffed him as we left him, and separated to go home. But the memory of some verses he had written on suicide in the *Century*, verses of dramatic power, haunted me. I could not eat my dinner, and leaving it unfinished I hurried out into the streets to see Fawcett at the house of his sister, Mrs. de Coppet, in West Seventeenth Street. Fawcett, too, gave up his dinner, and through the storm we made haste to Jack's lodgings. He was not there, and had not been. I pictured him — Jack, with his ready laughter and affectionate ways; Jack of songs and stories; Jack, miraculously transfigured, his faults wiped out, his merits shining — I pictured him dragging down the length of a dark and slippery pier and there escaping all his perplexities by flinging himself into the rushing tide. We searched all his haunts for him. They had not seen him since yesterday, and Fawcett's unbelief yielded slowly to my conviction.

At about nine o'clock, wet and dispirited, we looked into one of the little French restaurants that then clustered in Greene and Bleecker Streets — was it the Restaurant du Grand Vatel, magnificent in nothing

but its name, or the more modest Taverne Alsacienne, where the dinner of five courses, *vin compris*, cost thirty-five cents? There we discovered him, debonair as ever, ending his repast with a *pousse-café*, and reading a soiled copy of "Suicide" to a group of admirers in a corner. Our "pious feelings" had been played on, and we were as mad as the bull in Hardy's story. No sin of the Decalogue is so unforgivable as an advantage taken of one's sensibilities: that somehow pricks our vanity; the noblest part of us is duped and humiliated and turned to gall. When we had expressed our opinion of him he turned a front of sheepish innocence toward us. "You seem to be disappointed — you seem to be in a hurry," he complained. "Wait. If you wait, you'll see."

After a parley we induced him to come with us, and saw him to his lodgings. He lit the flickering gas, and threw himself on the bed. He picked up a razor from the dressing table.

"Do it," said Fawcett in a provocative voice, cruel and callous it seemed to me in my horror, a voice provocative and instigatory. I thought that the taunt must impel the lurking impulse from the shame of its irresolution.

But Jack, like a child, allowed me to take the razor away from him without more than a feint at a struggle, and as I put it safely into my trousers pocket I saw that an anti-climax would end the little drama of the night.

Two days later he slunk into my rooms in Stuyvesant Square and asked for it. Confident then that it would not be misused, I gave it to him for the shave he badly needed.

Sometimes "Charley" Stoddard (Charles Warren Stoddard of the "South Sea Idylls") "dropped" in, perhaps from Egypt or from San Francisco or from the Pacific paradise, one of the gentlest and most plaintive of little men, who was not inaptly described by Mark Twain as "such a nice girl." He had a beseeching, wistful, propitiating manner, shot with gleams of humour that played as the sun plays through clouds. When he smiled at you it was with a mute entreaty for sympathy. Once he appeared in an old ulster, much too big for him, its skirts sweeping the floor; he had borrowed it from Joaquin Miller, "the poet of the Sierras," as he explained, without seeing any reason for our laughter.

"Charley" would take from us anything he wanted, and we could spare, as he took the air, or as a child takes things, as a natural right, without constraint or the awkward protestations of gratitude of the ordinary receiver: a night's, a week's lodging, the freedom of one's table, one's pipes, one's gloves, one's money, but when his ships came home — they were always belated and unlucky — restitution never failed, and what was his at once became ours. Oh, those ships of the needy and improvident! How long they were at sea! How seldom they made port! And when they made port, how shrunk were their freights! Like the *Flying Dutchman*, few of them ever doubled the Cape. They were like the ships of his own poem of "The Cocoa Tree":

> Cast on the water by a careless hand,
> Day after day the winds persuaded me;
> Onward I drifted till a coral tree
> Stayed me among its branches, where the sand

Gathered about me, and I slowly grew,
Fed by the constant sun and the inconstant dew.

The sea birds build their nests against my root,
And eye my slender body's horny case;
Widowed within this solitary place,
Into the thankless sea I cast my fruit;
Joyless I thrive, for no man may partake
Of all the store I bear and harvest for his sake.

No more I heed the kisses of the morn;
The harsh winds rob me of the life they gave;
I watch my tattered shadow in the wave
And hourly droop and nod my crest forlorn,
While all my fibres stiffen and grow numb,
Beck'ning the tardy ships, the ships that never come.

"How many are the milestones on which I have sat," he wrote to me, "looking on my last dollar and wondering where the next was to come from!" But he really never worried much: each milestone was a mile nearer to the happy valley; he had the true gypsy, vagabond spirit, which receives without complaint whatever falls, and frets not for more indulgence than an indifferent fate bestows.

One of the most original of American authors; one who could catch the soul of things below their superficial and material aspects; one whose charm inheres in a style and fancy too rarefied to be at once or at all appreciated by the casual, unreflective, uncultivated reader, he will endure in that first little book of the sea and flowers, which as I reread it inclines me to call him the Charles Lamb of the Pacific.

Robert Louis Stevenson was charmed by it and him. He sketched him in "The Wrecker," the queer little man who lived in a shanty on Telegraph Hill, and,

missing him one day, he left under Stoddard's door this jingle on a scrap of paper:

O Stoddard! in our hours of ease,
Despondent, dull, and hard to please,
When coins and business wrack the brow,
A most infernal nuisance, thou!

O Stoddard! if to man at all,
To me unveil thy face —
At least to me —
Who at thy club and also in this place
Unwearied have not ceased to call,
Stoddard for thee!

I scatter curses by the row,
I cease from swearing never;
For men may come and men may go,
But Stoddard's out forever.

"South Sea Idylls" gave literature a fresh voice and showed a new capacity in familiar words. It filled the nostrils with the scent of lilies and orange flowers and our ears with the diapason of the sea murmuring along coral reefs.

He was always turning up unexpectedly in unexpected ways. When I was in San Francisco he was the idol of the Bohemian Club; then he went to the Sandwich Islands and remained there so long and was so contented with the simple life he was living, unharassed by cares or ambitions, that I supposed he would never willingly exchange the bread fruit and airy vesture of that perpetual summer-land for the flesh-pots of prosaic civilization. Later he was appointed professor of English Literature at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, the choice having been made on the principle that a teacher who can reveal the soul of a book to his class is better than

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the man whose only recommendations are syntax and history. His methods were original (his spelling was abominable), but they were no doubt effective, and while the faculty were amply satisfied with his services, he became immensely popular with the students. Then he went to Covington, Kentucky. "I was so used up when I left the college," he wrote to me, "that for some months I felt as if I would never recover, but the loving care of my good friends here, and the unspeakable purity of the Kentucky whiskey, coupled with some weeks of absolute rest and the absence of responsibility, have pulled me through."

His affections reached out as devouringly as the tentacles of an octopus. After our meeting in San Francisco we became correspondents, and though I wrote to him, as I thought, without reserve, and with a warm regard, we had only just begun when he protested that my letters were "too formal."

"What does he expect?" said Saltus (not Edgar, but his half-brother, Frank). "I suppose he thinks you ought to address him as 'Dear old Pard, you mash me. You're a Nineveh brick, and don't you forget it!'"

No one was hailed with more gladness in our symposia at Oscar's than Maurice Barrymore, the father of Ethel, Lionel, and John. He would drift in after the play, one of the handsomest fellows in town, well-bred and well-read, captivating in manner, and unspoiled by any of the affectations which cling like paint to so many young actors when they move outside the theatre. In those days he was fastidious as to his attire and not, as he became later, careless of his personal appearance. His mobile and sensitive face was as pallid as that of Edwin Booth, and, like Booth's, his deep and significant eyes

gathered intensity in contrast with its ivory whiteness. He had some repose then, and was not the flighty creature he afterward became through burning his candle at both ends and in the middle, all at once.

The leading man at the leading theatres, the ideal *jeune premier*, he cared little or nothing for his success as an actor. What he always wanted to do was to write plays: that ambition was ever in his mind, ever on his tongue. I have been told that, after his collapse, that tragical collapse of his, when his mind gave way, the passion reasserted itself, and the first thing he did was to beg for pencil and paper and apply himself to the preparation of a drama, the parts in which he assigned to his fellows in misfortune.

Let us draw the curtain over that painful scene and recall him as he was while unbereft: nimble in wit, amiable, courteous, patient under attack, and aglow with enthusiasm. I say, patient under attack. I have seen him bear annoyance as only a strong man can, and shrug his shoulders without other reprisal than a scathing word or two which made the person to whom they applied aware of his own ridiculousness.

Once, when we were talking, one among us persisted in begging the question. He could not keep to it, but muddled it with all sorts of irrelevance. If we spoke of China he spoke of Peru; while we had Euripides in hand he dragged in Andrew Jackson, or somebody else unrelated to the discussion. It was impossible to pin him down or to shut him up. I dare say many people will recognize in him a by no means uncommon kind of bore. Barrymore hit the right definition for him: "The cuttlefish of conversation. It's no use to follow

him. If you do he will at once disappear in the cloud of his own exudations."

Once in your company, "Barry," as we called him, would stay, if you could, till dawn or long after dawn, gaining rather than losing brilliance as the hours passed and the world began to shake its chains. Out would come his latest play, not a manuscript, not even notes, but a rush of turbulent ideas not yet committed to paper. With matches, ashes, or the tricklings from a glass he would make a diagram of the stage, and then with his finger indicate the action he proposed. At the beginning his synopsis would be lucid and detailed, and the characters mentioned by name; then as he warmed up he would abbreviate his exposition, giving names no more, and substituting for them only personal pronouns — "He" here, "She" there, while the action would be described by gesticulations and running commentaries, peppered with sulphurous expletives.

"You see! You see! He comes in here, R. U. E., the d — d — d —! She's standing at a table, centre, arranging flowers. He sneaks toward her. She sees him, and cries 'Ah!' Taken by surprise. Horrified, clutches the back of a chair. He seizes her by the wrist and drags her toward him, and whispers in her ear. She drops to the floor, moaning, paralyzed. Para'yzed! He — the d — d — d! grinds his teeth and is alarmed. He springs to the doors, locks all of them. Shuts the windows. Pulls down all the shades. Blows out the lamps. You see? Comes back to her. Snarls. He has a knife in his hand, the God-forsaken son of a sea-cook, the hoofed and horned ——!!!"

On that, or something like it (the parody is confessed), the curtain would come down, and the breathless Barry

would light another cigarette and say, "I am writing that little bit for myself. I see myself in it. I *feel* myself in it. And Georgie will do the widow."

"Georgie" was his wife, a very clever actress, the sister of John Drew.

While he was with you he was indivisibly yours, and the rest of the world had to wait for him; but when the rest of the world captured him in its turn you became the negligible quantity. His engagements were recorded in air. He meant to keep them, no doubt; he was contrite when he failed, but his clock stopped, and time had no measurements as he abandoned himself to any society that interested him. So amiable was he, so diverting, so original, that his companions never willingly let him go, and they were as much to blame, if not more, for his delinquencies.

One day I met him in London, and took him to my club for luncheon. We spent the whole afternoon together very happily, and it sped faster than we reckoned. Darkness came before he insisted that he must go, really must. I urged him to stay to dinner, but no, he had an imperative and unescapable engagement.

"At what hour?" I asked.

"At one o'clock," he replied, quite seriously, and it was then close upon seven.

Many of the plays, probably most of them, were never written. They came and went in and out of his mind like shooting stars, dazzling him with their promise, and then eluding him. Plays of that sort can be measured only by their author's belief in them, and that is as good as to say that the plays achieved are inferior to them. They are unchallenged, uncriticized, unexposed to misunderstanding, jealousy, and depreciation. Their incu-

bation is an unalloyed delight, a pleasant dream without the disenchantment of any rude awakening. Nevertheless, Barrymore made one substantial success in his "Nadjesda," the sombre drama in which Modjeska starred — the play which he believed inspired Sardou's later "La Tosca." He was vituperative against the wrong that he contended had been done him in that case. He claimed that he had submitted "Nadjesda" to Bernhardt, and that after rejecting his manuscript she had conveyed the essence of it to Sardou, who had used it as the foundation of "La Tosca." In all other things than play-writing he was one of the least vain of men.

You could please him by praising his acting, which often deserved praise and received plenty of it from both the people "in front" and his colleagues. His fellow-players of all degrees were as warm in their regard for him as those who were not in the profession, which can be said of but a few actors. They were always repeating his witticisms and giving examples of his ingenuity in extricating himself from difficulties on the stage, such as losing his "lines" and extemporizing till nothing but the cue was saved. In his time he played many and various parts excellently — Orlando, Maurice de Saxe, and Jim the Penman; scores of them come back to mind, none more vividly than Rawdon Crawley in Mrs. Fiske's memorable adaptation of "Vanity Fair." But could he have chosen his work, all other things would have been abandoned for that consuming ambition which, down to the very end, minimized and superseded all other interests.

When my wife and I invited him to luncheon or dinner, we usually looked for him at any hour but the hour appointed, or, I should say, any hour later than the

hour appointed. Whenever he appeared — at three instead of one, or at nine instead of seven, though other people's belatedness could not be similarly condoned — he escaped reprimand, and at once imparted to any conversation a fillip, making, as it were, still water effervesce. One afternoon he arrived on the stroke of the clock, surprising us as much by the spruceness of his attire as by his exceptional punctuality. We had ceased to expect either; long habit had accustomed us to his neglect of both, and confirmed us in patience. Epigrams were easy to him. He was not addicted to long speeches; what he said was crisp and edged with raillery. We talked of books, of pictures, and, be sure, of plays — Shakespeare and the musical glasses. How he found time to read I do not know, but he was a well-read man. The conversation shifted to religion, and an avowal of his led to an exclamation and a question.

"You are not a Roman Catholic, Barry!"

"Yes, William, I am, but I'm afraid God does not know it!"

He stayed and stayed, remaining long after the others had gone, and such a rapid change came over him as I had never seen in any human being before and hope never to see again. He became lachrymose, spasmodic, and hysterical. He aged before our eyes as though years were slipping away from him instead of hours. His speech rambled and stumbled, tears filled his eyes, his handsome face became haggard and senile. He pulled himself together and laughed before his departure. But the laughter was constrained, and when the door closed, the door that had been opened for him so gladly, I had a too soon verified presentment that we should not meet him again.

Alas, poor Yorick! Draw the veil on his frailty, for it was far outweighed by kindness and many other merits. In his character and temperament he was not unlike his own favourite of fiction — Fielding's Tom Jones — a sinner, but a very sweet one.

Sometimes we were twenty strong at Oscar's, and among others were Edgar Fawcett, George Parsons Lathrop, William Henry Bishop, H. C. Bunner, Francis S. Saltus, and George Edgar Montgomery, "the poet of the future," as the poor boy liked to be called, "the poet of the middle of next week," as Saltus dubbed him.

How much it takes to make a name, an enduring reputation! When we seem to be on the edge of it we are flicked off like flies by the new generation, which has its own tastes and its own favourites. How good was the work of Bishop, Bunner and Lathrop in criticism, verse, and fiction! High place and some permanence seemed assured for them. Each had a quality of his own. Each was above the average. Whimsical humour was the strong point of Bishop and Bunner, a humour not dependent on the slang of the streets, as so much of what passes as humour now is. They wrote as educated men for educated people, putting perhaps too great a value on style. So did Lathrop, the son-in-law of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who, essentially a poet, was compelled against his preferences to be also a handy man of letters, of the kind editors rejoice in. Whatever you gave him to do he did — verse or prose, criticism, fiction, or history — with sufficient skill and conscientiousness to conceal from the reader the incubus of effort and distaste. His versatility was remarkable, his craftsmanship unimpugnable, and, though often restricted

to the ambling gait of hack work, he showed in the breathing spaces of his manumission how good a seat he had on Pegasus.

Ask now at the bookseller's for Lathrop's "Echo of Passion," for Bunner's "Short Sixes" or for Bishop's "Detmold," which Howells thought so much of that he used it serially in the *Atlantic*. In all probability he will say they are not in stock or that they are out of print, referring you to the chances of the dust in a second-hand shop. Ah, my dear young friend, in whose ears applause is ringing, enjoy it while you may, but put not your faith in Posterity! Posterity will snatch the laurels which tickle your brow, and sponge your name with the biggest and wettest of sponges from the slate, that others may write on it. The grandchildren of the girls who dote on you now will wonder how on earth such dreary old stuff as yours could ever have been popular.

Some day I should like to write an article on forgotten authors; there are so many of them on whom neglect has unjustly and inexplicably fallen. Surely you do not think yourself comparable with Theodore Winthrop, Fitzhugh Ludlow, J. W. de Forest, Albert Webster, or Constance Fenimore Woolson? Yet who reads them now? Very few remember even their names. I will write that article and suggest to a publisher a reprint of those discarded masterpieces of the past. If, in the future, a fragment of you is enshrined in that way, it will be all you can expect from Posterity, and her twin sister, Oblivion, will resist even that.

Only one in the set at Oscar's made a commercial success. We liked him, but I am afraid we patronized

him. He had been in business in California and was business-like in method and manner, not a dreamer, not an idealist, to whom pelf was less than constancy to art. He was thick in figure, thick-voiced, and pragmatic — on a lower plane than we reckoned ourselves to be. I think we classed him as an outsider; no doubt we were a little priggish and too consciously superior, but he was very amiable and forbearing, and in a degree pathetic. He had written a novel, and was convinced that it was a great novel. The publishers did not agree with him at all; probably no other novel met with more discouragement from them than his did. But rejection after rejection did not shake his steadfast faith in it, and though inwardly from an incomplete knowledge of it, we slighted it, his patience and fortitude under rebuff compelled our admiration. In the end, I think, he published it at his own cost.

His name was Archibald Clavering Gunter, and the novel was "Mr. Barnes of New York." Fifty copies of it, perhaps a hundred, sold to one of any of ours, and it is not out of fashion yet. Gunter and it are not forgotten. I do not mean to speak of them with disrespect. The public will have what it wants, especially stories of thrills and incessant action. Few of that kind excel "Mr. Barnes" or the other stories of Gunter's, which afterward flowed from him in a stream till they seemed to inundate every bookstall, and even the trains moving across the Continent. Afoot ourselves, we saw him driving down the Avenue in his carriage with liveried servants, as friendly as ever, and, for all that display, ostensibly as simple as ever; and while we may have murmured at the inscrutability of the public taste we

did not forsake the composure and little refinements of the quiet way.

> Though lacking gold we never stooped
> To pick it up in all our days;
> Though lacking praise, we sometimes drooped,
> We never asked a soul for praise."

I have said that we were not to be found at Oscar's in the daytime, but before assembling there we often dined at places in the French Quarter, which was then as French as France itself. Here was the Restaurant du Grand Vatel, named after the celebrated and heroic cook of Louis XIV, who, utterly chagrined at the failure of a certain fish to arrive in time for one of his dinners, ended his life by running a sword through his body. The tariff was ridiculously moderate. A dish of soup and a plate of beef and bread cost fifteen cents; soup aux croûtons, five cents; bœuf, légumes, ten cents; veau à la Marengo, twelve cents; mouton à la Ravigotte, ten cents, ragoût de moutons aux pommes, eight cents; bœuf braisé aux oignons, ten cents; macaroni au gratin, six cents; celeri salade, six cents; compote de pommes, four cents; fromage Neufchâtel, three cents; Limbourg, four cents, and Gruyère, three cents. Extra bread was a penny more, and though we insincerely protested against it as a shameless extortion, we never made fifty cents go farther than at those repasts. The very name of the place increased the value received. The sonorousness of it and its traditions sweetened the wine, strengthened the coffee, and deepened repose. The Black Cat confessed queerness. The Taverne Alsacienne was obviously depraved; its atmosphere was of absinthe; dark groups in blue blouses with tobacco pouches hung from their necks whispered there of the Commune. . . .

Where did you dine? There was grandeur in it — at du Grand Vatel.

Then there were occasional intermissions in our poverty, when cheques came like feathers from an angel's wings from the *Galaxy*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's* or *Appleton's Journal*. The French Quarter was forsaken then. Nothing was too good or too dear for us; we made merry at Delmonico's or at Seighortner's — the old mansion of the Astor family in Lafayette Place, which retained the quietude and dignity of a stately private house and provided epicurean food — old Seighortner himself, oiliest of hosts, hovering over us, smiling, and rubbing his hands; while the solemn and unhurried waiter set before us the incomparable chicken gumbo, the pompano and English sole and the bird so white and tender that it might have been nursed in the bosom of the same angel that had brushed us with her feathers.

> Where is the laughter
> That shook the rafter?
> Where is the rafter, by the way?'

VI

THE LURE OF THE PLAY

THOUGH we had not Barrymore's training for it, we all wanted to write plays, and some of us tried to do it, seeing, as we wrote, visions of crowded houses, of long runs, and of riches unattainable in any other way. "The Play's the thing, whereby" — we'll fill our pockets and live ever after as well as the doctor, the lawyer, the broker, the packer, and the pill-maker.

What happened to us happens every day. The bundles of hopes and efforts left at the box office or the stage door nearly always come back to us after a long delay, or they are lost, with or without apologies, and we have not courage enough to repeat the work. Between the sanguine moment of deposit and the deferred return we have no peace. From day to day the manager says, "You shall have an answer to-morrow," and to-morrow again tells you "to morrow," until the word becomes the most repellant in the dictionary. He makes appointments which he does not keep, and you hang about the theatre, unable to fix your mind on the other things on which your bread and butter depend. You sit in the cryptic gloom of the "back of the house" in the daytime, longing, fidgeting, sighing, while the hollow reverberations of a rehearsal drift from the stage, and the brusque doorkeeper transfixes you with instinctive suspicion and antipathy.

When you catch your man he is still in doubt — always in doubt, sure of nothing but that he is in doubt. But as you observe him rippling the pages of your manuscript and letting his eyes wander in abstraction over the old programmes and pictures of actors and actresses on the walls of the little room, you decide that suspense is more endurable than doom.

"I don't know, I don't know," he slowly and exasperatingly murmurs, shaking his head vaguely while you watch him as a weathercock veering in the wind, or as a leaf eddying at a sharp bend of a river. He is the image of vacillation, a creature of tormenting indecision, and while he pauses, you feel like taking him by the throat and crying, "Make up your mind and say 'yes,' or die!"

"I don't know, I don't know," he repeats in a sing-song voice.

He ought to know, for he has had the play for a year or more. But, of course, you control yourself. If he is a goose it must be remembered that he has been known to hatch golden eggs. You despise his irresolution, but by an effort keep your hands off him.

"I like the fourth act ——"

Ah, the man has some sense after all! You were convinced that he must see the strength of the situation in the fourth act. Your spirits rise with your respect for his intelligence.

"I like the fourth act, but I don't know — I don't know that it would go; no, I don't know."

You are sinking, and grasp at the last straw of elusive chance. He has closed the manuscript, and almost imperceptibly is pushing it over the table toward you. You see it gliding toward you as Macbeth saw the dagger.

"Unless you're willing to leave it with me for a day

or two longer. Perhaps Billy had better read it again, and I'd like to think it over myself."

"Billy," is his reader and adviser, and you are under no misapprehension as to what the "day or two longer" means: it means what no man can foretell, next month, next year, or never. But like a craven you yield to the outrageous procrastination, and weakly assent. "All right. No, I don't want to hurry you. Take your time by all means. It's very good of you to like the fourth act; very good of you."

Then you creep away, full of contempt for yourself, to make room for the lovely, palpitating, fluffy, flowery, feathery young lady, the next candidate for employment, who has been nervously preening herself and waiting for you to go, and who sits in your chair, facing the narrow, tarnished window, the shade of which he immediately raises so that all the light possible falls on her while he scrutinizes her, pathologically, with his back to it.

The next time you see him coming your way in the street, your heart thumps. You think he will stop and refer to the play, but he has nothing but a frosty nod for you, if his face does not crimp into a semblance of repudiation at the sight of you.

How you wait for the postman! And how your hand trembles whenever you receive a letter, and you scrutinize the corner and the seal for the imprint of that theatre. "My wind is turned to bitter North," sang Arthur Hugh Clough, and in that quarter it remains for you through spring and summer, and you feel like a disembodied soul floating among the nettles and mists of Purgatory. Not a word comes to relieve you. You write and are not answered. At last you call again, and this time "Billy"

receives you, and greets you as "old man" in a propitiatory way, though you are almost a stranger to him. He is the personification of affability and good fellowship, and offers you a cigarette.

"How useful the cigarette habit is," a high official in London said to me not long ago. "Time was when it took twenty minutes or half an hour of polite preliminaries before I could find out what a caller wanted. Now I offer him a cigarette, which establishes an immediate intimacy, and we plunge into the heart of things, and begin to be immoral at once."

"Billy" skims the universe, and talks of all sorts of things: presses you to take another, and "old mans" you as though you were, of all his chums, the most welcome. He leaves you to speak of the play, and when you do speak of it he says, "Ah," and fumbles in drawers and among bundles of newspapers and other manuscripts, turning over all the litter in his search for the precious document, the ink of which has been drawn from your life-blood. Perhaps he fails, and in that case he tells you it must be in the safe, of which the manager has the key, and that it shall be sent to you by special messenger in the evening. If he produces it, you listen to him as the prisoner in the dock listens to the foreman of the jury. He slaps it with his hand, raising a cloud of dust.

"A bully good play, and you'll place it, sure. Take it to Frohman or Belasco: either of 'em will jump at it, both of 'em will jump at it. But the fourth act needs strengthening; it's the weakest. I'd rewrite that — Going? Here! Have another cigarette."

That last cigarette is the token of the sympathy he does not express.

Perhaps, however, the wind softens just as patience

has been drawn, like an elastic band, close to the point at which it must break and recoil. Not the subordinate but the manager summons you, and when you present yourself he is in his chair, as abstracted and distraught as ever. You smile abjectly, he thaws a little but only along the edges, the ice beyond revealing no "lead," such as polar explorers describe, through the hummocked barrier of frost. But you become subconscious in a dim, psychological way similar to that by which you sense spring in the air before a bud appears, that a change for the better impends, though the weathercock is not steady, and Hope whispers not that "he will" but that he "may." Why otherwise should he fetch the play out of the drawer again, and show the interlineations and queries in his own hand on the now soiled pages? You thank God that he does not see-saw more than twice or thrice in his wearisome negation, "I don't know." He is slow and hesitating, yet you see that he is making an effort to resolve himself into some sort of decision.

"Well, we'll try it. I don't think it will go, but we'll try it."

Then you reproach yourself and retract all the unholy, unjust, homicidal thoughts you have had of him, and you have difficulty in restraining a wild, Gallic impulse to embrace him. He isn't a palaverer, a flatterer, but a cautious, responsible, discriminating man, all the surer to lead you to success through his possession of those qualities. Your play has been in the crucible of his calm and scientific criticism, and triumphs because its merits have prevailed after the closest scrutiny and analysis, and are no longer open to criticism.

What heavenly music is it that falls on your ear? "Author!" "Author!" "Author!"

It is like trees swaying in the wind and mingling their voices with the patter of falling water. It is the applause of the audience in front, demanding your presence before the curtain at the end of the fourth act, on the first night. Anticipation runs away with you: beware lest she trips you short of the iridescent goal. There are pitfalls everywhere on the way.

You have frequent consultations with "Billy" now, which shake your faith in his competency, even in his sanity. He spoils the symmetry of the play; transposes the situations, or discards them, and blue-pencils the most eloquent lines; pshaws! the sparkling epigrams you have excogitated with all the pains of parturition.

"No, old man! That'll never do. They wouldn't stand it, never!"

His elisions are hard enough to bear, but less annoying than his interpolations, which are perverted, tasteless, mechanical, and contrary to plausibility and reason. "Billy" has a bad reputation. His enemies say that when it suits him, he is not above using in any play he has in hand, ideas plagiarized from other plays which have been rejected. You groan at what you have to put up with in your intercourse with him, including his cigarettes and his fondness for cocktails and "high balls," but your conferences with him give you access to the theatre in the daytime — not merely to the auditorium during a performance, but to the arcana at the back of the house, that enchanting, esoteric region of mystery and twilight, where draughts blow, and the sounds are as spectral as those of the catacombs. The finest performance seen in all its completeness from the stalls is dull and commonplace compared with the view you get of it behind the scenes. The consciousness of privilege

flatters you; participation in the creation of illusion is far more absorbing than subjection to it. The discipline of all who are producing it—the stage manager, the property men, the electricians, the scene shifters and the actors themselves—fill you with awe and admiration. They hang on words, and the moment the words are spoken they respond as instantaneously as galley slaves under the whip. They are alert, anxious, strained.

I have met many actors in their dressing-rooms between the acts — Edwin Booth, Richard Mansfield, Henry Irving, and Herbert Beerbohm Tree; yet I have never seen one who under the stress was quite at his ease, or who could do more than make a polite attempt to listen or talk to you, even when you have come at his bidding. Mansfield reproached me if he saw me in the audience and I failed to present myself to him and his devoted wife, Beatrice, before the close of the play; but if I went I always found him on needles and pins, sweating, petulant, tremulous, and agitated to the verge of prostration. So swift is the obedience to commands, so utterly devoted and concentrated on his task is every member of the company and every member of the staff, high and low, that I can think of nothing but the gun crew of a battleship in action as a parallel.

The operation of all the wonderful machinery, human and mechanical, is best disclosed during a regular performance or at the "dress reheasal," which immediately precedes the first presentation of a piece to the public; but daytime in the theatre has a spell of its own; then you are out of this world and in another — a place of stumblings and surprises; of choked passages and unexpected steps up and down; of dusky labyrinths, in which you lose and bruise yourself, and find yourself in

perplexing recesses where you know you ought not to be. You knock against partitions, and look aloft to cloud-like hangings, guys, blocks, and pulleys like the standing and running gear of a ship. Here all the top-hamper seems to have come down on the run after a squall, and beyond are backgrounds — the unilluminated scenery — with splotchy colours like faded tapestries. A voice gathers volume and distinctness from the silence, and drones like that of a preacher heard from within in an empty and quiet church-yard. It is the manager catechising the fluffy, flowery, girlish aspirant in his sanctum. Afterward it rises angrily. He is scolding, yes actually scolding, nay, bullying, that pinnacled, magnificent, imperious creature, the leading man, whom you have regarded as a greater despot than the manager himself.

I have said "you" over and over again, but whose experience am I describing? Not yours alone, but the experience of most of the beginners who have ever passed the enchanted portals of the theatre to become familiar with its unbalanced pains and pleasures, its exaltation and its despair.

And, by the way, the matter of the contract has yet to be discussed. You will have views of your own about that, and will endeavour to slip them in somehow if you get the chance. You have heard of the terms exacted by Pinero, of his splendid percentages of the box-office receipts, of fortunes made out of a single play. But you know that you are not Pinero and your expectations are not exorbitant; probably you are ready, or too ready, to take whatever the manager offers. He is likely to propose buying the play outright instead of paying royalties on each performance of it, and you will say with a parched tongue in a quavering voice, "All right."

I remember Edgar Fawcett's experience with his first play, which A. M. Palmer of the old Union Square Theatre had read and liked. I waited in the vestibule while Edgar was closeted with him. I was as much interested in the result as if the play had been my own. When Edgar reappeared trembling with excitement he threw decision on me.

"William! He says he will give me twenty-five dollars for every evening performance, and fifteen dollars for every matinée, or five hundred dollars down as a purchase price! Five hundred dollars down, William! *Down!*"

The emphasis on "down" was touching; the word never could have been used in a fuller sense than it was then. Both of us were needy, and were seldom if ever in possession of so vast a sum; it seemed like tempting Providence to refuse having it at once and all at once. What a dinner we could have at Delmonico's, or at his club, the Union, to which he had belonged since his twenty-first year, his father having "put him up" in boyhood! Though he worked in an attic in Tompkins Square he was a frequenter of the fashionable and opulent Union and ruffled it with the best of them there.

I could see "down" casting its spell over the poor boy to the exclusion of other considerations. I was calmer than he was, and better able to weigh the alternatives. There could be no question as to the probity of Palmer, one of the most intelligent and honourable of managers, who with such plays as "The Two Orphans" and "Led Astray" had, without previous theatrical experience, lifted the little Union Square into a high place. At that time he never made the mistakes which

later on reversed his fortune. Each long run was followed by another as long or longer.

"If it should be a failure and run for only a month the royalties would amount to six hundred and sixty dollars," I figured.

"But it might run only a week, or never be produced at all. Lots of plays are accepted, and a few of them are announced on the bills, and then withdrawn. Five hundred dollars *down*! Oh, William!"

He reluctantly decided on the royalties, and his play, "A False Friend," filled the better part of a season, bringing him, with the added royalties from other theatres, nearer four thousand dollars than five hundred.

I had a curious little adventure of my own. I wrote a four-act comedy drama called "A Latter Day Gentleman," the leading part in which I designed (with all his idiosyncrasies before me) for H. J. Montague, to whom, I think, the now hackneyed and tiresome epithet, a "matinée idol," was first applied. Women doted on him. His voice dripped tears like Bernhardt's when emotion was required; its cadences were as music. He was gentlemanly on and off the stage, not robust or virile enough for swaggering romantic parts, but perfect in garden and drawing-room scenes, appealing and irresistible in his beauty and his heaven-sent suavity. I visualized him in every word I wrote, conforming my character to all his abilities and to all his limitations. The part was that of a barrister of the Inner Temple: a heavy swell; a tame, purring sort of creature on the surface, but below that veneer a devil of a fellow, astute, ingenious, and courageous, with a tongue of wit and sarcasm which wiped out every adversary. The reader may smile, but he should remember that those were

the days of Robertson, and that my hero was to be impersonated by Montague.

I sent him a scenario, and though the accompanying letter was written on editorial note-paper he did not, strange to say (for editorial note-paper is not often ignored), pay any attention to it. Perhaps his answer miscarried, but I, twenty-three, and more important than I have been since, did not deign to inquire. I was on the eve of departure as special correspondent of the New York *Times* with the Wheeler Expedition, a military survey of the unmapped regions of Arizona, southern Colorado, and New Mexico, and a little of the "ready," as the English call it, was very desirable for my equipment. So I despatched my play to Arthur Cheney, who had an excellent stock company at the Globe Theatre, in Boston and offered to sell it to him for what a manuscript of equal length would "fetch" from *Harper's Magazine* or *Scribner's Monthly*. He took it so quickly that I at once suspected I had thrown my work away and been foolish in not asking for more: my refilled purse, comforting as it was, should have been fuller of bills of larger denominations. It is imprudent, however, to haggle about the price of a gun with the man who, in a safe place himself, offers it to you while the wolf is at the door. Ah, those wolves at the door! How many of them one encounters on the thorny trails of a literary career! What an uneasy time you have between them and the missing ships for which you wait in vain!

Before the field season was over, and while I was still among the lava beds, the mesas and cañons of the Southwest, Cheney died, and also the fascinating Montague. A year or so afterward I was lunching with Mr.

Palmer at the Union Square Hotel, and W. R. Floyd, who had been the stage manager of Cheney's theatre, sat down with us. I asked him about my play.

"I can tell you all about it," he said, though that was saying too much. "Cheney bought it to sell again to Montague. That part — what's his name? — might have been written for poor old Harry. It would have fitted him like a glove. Then we passed it on to Lester Wallack, and he thought of doing it, but was dissuaded. The part was too juvenile for him, of course, but Lester didn't see that, poor old chap. He'd act Cupid, with golden wings and a waxed moustache if anybody encouraged him. Now ——"

The story grew in interest as it approached the climax! Floyd aimed a finger at Palmer.

"Now, Palmer, you've got it. When Wallack returned it, it was sent to you. Own up."

Palmer had no recollection of it, not even of the title. Perhaps Cazauran had it — "Caz," Palmer's factotum, a little dark man of many languages, a master of theatrical devices, the David Belasco of that era, who worked plays over and made them presentable by changes which, however they displeased the authors, suited the public. I have not an ill word for "Caz," though there were some who disliked him. He had a genius for theatrical situations of the kind which thrill audiences and fill the house — situations which I believe the majority will long prefer to the documentary, undemonstrative, rational plays insisted upon by the few zealots of the new drama. He was friendly to me, and I had as little reason to question his honesty as Mr. Palmer's. "The Latter Day Gentleman" could not be found, nor has it ever been found to my knowledge up to the present. Possi-

bly it fell into the hands of some "Billy," and, renamed, reconstructed, its scenes transplanted, its characters Americanized or Australianized, it was somewhere and somehow in some degree a success, though not such a success as it could have been had the curled Montague taken the principal part and delivered its lines in that melodious, melting, tender voice of his which seemed to trickle down the hearer's spine.

When I told a veteran who had written many plays that I was writing one, he said, "Don't do it. They (the people of the theatre) will wear your heart out." But some hearts endure as long as breath lasts, and no grindstone ever wears them out.

From this by-path I must return to you, quivering, dry-mouthed, in your chair in that dark, stuffy little room, and watching furtively the manager's eyes roving from you to the stained portraits and programmes on the walls as though he were disturbed by other and far more important matters than you and your work. You are afraid that if you stand off he will back out. You know that you are not Pinero, and the man opposite knows that he holds the trump cards. A nervous cough betrays you. He who, unafflicted with a cold, coughs in that way during a business negotiation marks himself as one whose hand is weak, and who can be either cajoled or browbeaten. It is a case of take it or leave it, and at a sign of impatience from him you precipitately surrender, repeating, "All right," and adding, "Thanks. So much obliged." Thus it ends: the play becomes his, and the money yours. He is not wanting in sagacity in preferring to buy a piece outright on the basis of possible failure than to pay royalties proportioned to possible success.

Probably months pass before you hear of it again; it may be announced in the bills, and even then postponed, owing to an unexpectedly long run of the piece on the boards, or because from London, Paris, or Berlin comes an assured success by some well-known dramatist, to delay it; the purchaser may decide after all that it will not do, and sacrifice the small amount of his check rather than take too many chances with it; it may be buried in a cupboard, a drawer, or the safe, to the end of your days: everybody but you may forget all about it, and you alone may worry and protest, the sole sufferer of gnawing uncertainty. Worry you must; no effort of the mind, not all the "science" of all psychotherapists can save you, and whatever you attempt in the vocation that has previously engaged you loses its spontaneity and drags like shackles of the soul.

Let us suppose, however, that after the delay it is put in rehearsal. It is doubtful whether it is "Billy's" work or yours when he is done with it, and other changes are made in the manuscript as the rehearsals proceed. The cast is chosen, orders are given to the property man and the scene painter,

"I want for the first act," says the manager to the painter, "a scene in the diamond fields of South Africa; for the second, the exterior of an Elizabethan house; for the third, a handsome library; and, for the fourth, a conservatory. The diamond fields must be shown as at evening, the house and the library must be characteristic of the home of an old and prosperous family, and the conservatory must be as fine a 'set' as you can paint."

The painter then submits a number of plates to the manager: a picture from the *Illustrated London News* or the *Graphic* may give a suggestion of

what is wanted for the scene at the diamond fields; the illustrations of a work on the baronial homes of England may include such a library and exterior as would suit: and perhaps for the conservatory he submits a hasty water-colour drawing of his own or a design from some book on architecture.

"That's the thing," says the manager, pointing to selections from these, and he picks out the plates which fit his idea of what the scenes should be; and the artist gives him an estimate of the cost of production, specifying the quantities of lumber, canvas, and paint that will be required to build up a diamond gully, the Elizabethan mansion, and the conservatory. Perhaps the estimate is too large and is reduced, but he, more probably, is told to prepare his models with few limitations as to cost.

Now the property man is consulted. The rocks that will lie about the stage in the diamond field, the cataract in the background, the implements of the miners, the tents and the wagons, the furniture in the library, and all the appurtenances of the conservatory are to be made or procured by him and disposed of on the stage before the performance begins. The rocks are to be of papier-maché, and the cataract is to be simulated by a revolving drum of tinsel or glass beads with a strong light upon it. It is his business, or the mechanician's, to construct them, and the artist's to paint them. Every article used on the stage is in the property man's charge. The crowns of kings, the cross of Richelieu, the whip of Tony Lumpkin, the bleached skull of Yorick, the bell which the victorious hero strikes before having the discomfited villain shown to the door, and the fat purse with its crackling bank-notes and jingling coin which the honest but virtuous clerk refuses in the face of

temptation — all belong to the property man's department. The demands on his ingenuity and research take him into every kind of shop in every quarter of the city. He has dealings with ironmongers, milliners, upholsterers, and merchants of curios. The magnificent and costly suite of carved oak in the library scene, which is not veneer but substantial furniture, and the most trivial objects — a handbag or a hatrack — he must secure and put, night after night, in the exact place which the stage directions have prescribed. Each new play requires, of course, some new articles, and the accumulated stock is uniquely various from which the accoutrements of princes and potentates, beggars and nobles, soldiers and lackeys, priests and highwaymen, the riotously anachronistic material of a fancy-dress ball, may be gathered.

The scene painter is provided at the preliminary consultation with a "scene plot," wherein the exits and entrances, the doors, windows, and other openings necessary in the action of the play are specified, and at the same time a "property plot" is handed to the property man. As I have said, each article has an appointed place in which he must keep it, and we all know the embarrassing consequences of any negligence of his, as when the leading actor sits at a table to sign away his birthright and can find neither the pen nor the ink which the property plot calls for.

Another person has to be considered in mounting the play, and that is the carpenter, who builds up the framework of the scene and constructs the mechanical appurtenances, such as the flight of steps down the rocks in the diamond gully, the galleries in the library, the balustrade in the conservatory, and all the doors and windows.

The artist, the property man, and the machinist are together the craftsmen of the drama, and when they have been fully instructed — when the artist has his plot, the property man his, and the machinist his, and when the painter's models have been approved by the manager — the actors are called to hear the play read. A parenthesis is necessary here as to what the scene painter's models are, for the term is misleading. He has a small stage upon which he paints and sets each scene exactly as it is to appear on the larger one, except that it is on the reduced scale of half an inch or less to the foot of actual space; and the miniature, which is called a model, serves to guide him in his work and to give the manager a preliminary glimpse of what the finished scene will be.

Somewhere against the wall in a mysterious precinct hangs a board or a glass case in which the official notices of the management are exhibited; and one day a written slip is pinned or pasted in it which contains these words: "Company called for 'A Lame Excuse' at 10 A.M. Monday," "A Lame Excuse" being your play. There have been rumours of "something underlined" among the actors already, and when the call is made, the nature of the work, who of the company will be in it, what parts there are, and the probabilities of success, are discussed with much volubility.

If you were Pinero you would at this point become the despot of the stage. In all of his later productions he has insisted on the prerogative denied altogether or conceded only occasionally to other authors, of choosing the interpreters of his work and instructing them in every detail without deference to any other instruments than his own will and purpose, to which both manager

and actor must surrender. I can remember him when he himself was a minor actor at the Lyceum under Henry Irving, where the author was expected to submit to every change and every choice which the manager thought desirable. Irving was the autocrat there, and it was the author, whether he was obscure and diffident or as illustrious and exacting as Tennyson himself, who had to submit to the discretion of the great actor-manager. There are few, if any, managers who, though entirely destitute of Irving's genius to justify it, do not attempt to exercise a similar tyranny, or will grant to the author more than the liberty of appeal and suggestion. Probably Sir Arthur is the only living dramatist who has so completely reversed the relations in this respect of the manager and the author. The play must be produced as he has written it, the various parts assigned to the actors who are physically and temperamentally closest to his conception. These are bitter and irksome conditions to those who are in the habit of recognizing no authority above their own, and Sir Arthur may be said to stand in "splendid isolation" in his ability to exact them. Nor is anything lost to art or of commercial advantage by the transfer of authority. With his intimate and practical knowledge of the technicalities of the stage and his psychological divinations, he has a genius for the selection of those actors who by art and nature are capable of merging their individualities in the parts they are engaged for.

Being but a novice you may not be consulted at all. The first rehearsal is "with parts"— that is to say, the company appear in their street clothes, and without acting read the lines from typed copies in ordinary conversational tones — and while this is in progress the

manager has in his hands the complete play interleaved with blank pages, upon which he notes any further alterations that seem to be desirable. The effect on an unfamiliar observer of that rehearsal "with parts" is grotesque. The leading lady sits in a chair and swings her parasol and chats with her neighbour, while one of the gentlemen opposite to her reads a declaration of love in a sing-song voice from a roll of paper in his hand. Another member of the company has the lines: "Here for centuries the Mordaunts have lived the simple and honourable lives of English country gentlemen; here they have been born; here they have died; and among them all not one of them has ever done aught mean or base. Here, in this grand old hall, a reputation has been built which the proudest of nobles envy"; and should the spectator, following the wave of the actor's hand, look for the hall to which the speech refers, he would only discover the stage before him, with no scene set upon it, with the wings and the "flats" stacked up at the rear, the company scattered near the centre, and a few gas or electric lamps, paled by the rays of daylight issuing from a yellowish window. The heroine at another point, wandering, as the lines suppose, about the ample gardens of the Elizabethan house at twilight, bids her lover come and hear the cuckoo, but it is only the knocking of the machinist's hammer and the voices of the property men and the scene painter, who are working in the "flies" high above the proscenium, that are audible, and not the note of a bird.

At each rehearsal, something is added in gesture and tone, which strengthens the representation. The toil, perseverance, and discipline which are entailed cannot

be imagined by one who has not traced the progress of a new play at a good theatre. Whenever it seems that the most has not been made of a line or a situation it is repeated again and again. The "business" is gradually improved, and the author sees the company working with greater fluency at each trial.

On the first night the theatre is filled to the doors. There is a murmur of interest and curiosity. No one is more excited than the manager and you are. You, if you can stand the strain at all, hide yourself in a box or in the "wings"; if you cannot stand it, you absent yourself from the theatre and wait for the verdict at a distance in an agony of suspense like that of the uxorious young husband in Barrie's story, who paces the streets in trepidation while he wonders whether it will be a boy, a girl, twins, triplets, or nothing worth mentioning.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

ONE afternoon I was told that I must be at Oscar's that evening, for Aldrich was coming. The invitation needed no pressure, for at that time I was "playing the sedulous ape," as Stevenson calls it, to three authors at once — to James (we could read him without nut-crackers then), Howells, and Aldrich, who, for all his simplicity, was the most difficult to imitate.

He came early and stayed late. He was a good Bohemian then, and though his circumstances changed materially in later life, he always loved a quiet pipe, and was never happier than in the company of people of his own profession. He did not reserve himself for those who had won their laurels, but met as comrades those who were young, struggling, and unknown, without either condescension or the manner of benevolent tolerance from the heights of superiority. That is not to say that he patted everybody on the back. He warmed only to those who appealed to him through a kindred spirit. With others he could be cold and incommunicable enough. He was not of the complaisant kind, who from mere politeness readily acquiesce in what is passing. One could never be mistaken as to his likes and dislikes, for he was frankly outspoken whenever anything jarred him. Nor was he captious or rough in opposition. His weapon was raillery; it flashed in the air and pricked without venom and without leaving any rankling wound.

He literally laughed away those who crossed swords with him, and left them laughing too.

I can see him now, sitting at the round table at Oscar's, holding a briar pipe that was oftener between his fingers than in his mouth, and swinging it in graphic curves as he talked to us. He used it like a painter's brush or pencil. He was dressed in a quiet suit of tweeds, the sobriety of which was relieved by a flowing crimson scarf gathered at the neck by an antique ring. He was partial to crimson in those days, and it became his complexion and the light curls apostrophized by Bayard Taylor. We parted late and in a merry mood, the young fellows among us glorying in the new friend who was so witty, so suave, and so attentive to our ambitions and aspirations. Moreover, Aldrich had just succeeded to the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and hopes arose of possible advantages lying for young authors in that direction.

"I'll have an elegy ready for him before breakfast, and try to get ahead of Edgar," said Frank Saltus, referring to Edgar Fawcett, as the lights went out in Oscar's and we dispersed; and on the following morning he came to me, dissembling an air of despondence.

"It's no use. Edgar's beaten us all. He shipped a carload to the *Atlantic* by the fast freight before daylight — as per invoice, sonnets, ten bales; triolets, ballads, and rondeaux, three bales; novels and short stories, twenty tons in fifteen crates."

Edgar was beyond comparison the most prolific of all of us. His industry and his versatility were amazing. A member of fashionable clubs, and with a home in the best part of the town, he hid himself for work in a mean attic in the slums near Tompkins Square, and wrote

there from ten or eleven in the morning till four or five every afternoon. He never waited for moods or allowed lassitude to excuse inaction. Like Anthony Trollope, he always had a bit of cobbler's wax in his chair, and lifting himself by application and pertinacity out of any threatening lethargy, he compelled production and found exhilaration in his fecundity without disturbing himself by assaying his output too closely. His most serious work appeared under his own name, of course, but, under one pseudonym he poured forth sensational stories in cheap weeklies, and under another — feminine — pious verse for religious papers.

Aldrich accepted some of his contributions (not by any means the wholesale consignment Saltus imagined), but he was never timid in rejecting what he did not want, nor mealy-mouthed about it. His bitter pills were not sugar coated; he could not flatter, and never ran away from disagreeable duties in an obscuring cloud of euphuisms. On the contrary, he could be amply candid, not to say blunt, when his opinion was pressed for. Edgar insisted on reasons, and, getting them, flew into a temper with them. A vituperative and inflammatory letter from him left Aldrich quite unmoved. He smiled at it, but never answered it.

I remember another of that coterie, a very young author indeed. He acquired daintiness and polish at the sacrifice of force and originality. He was confident of a story into which he thought he had put his best, and was bewildered when Aldrich handed it back to him.

"Isn't it well written?" he asked.

"Very well written."

"I thought you would like some of the touches in it."

"There are beautiful things in it."

"Then what's the matter with it?"

"It isn't interesting."

That was all Aldrich said, and the author took it as irrevocable. Aldrich did not even say he was sorry, but perhaps it was to show his sympathy that he invited the disappointed young man to lunch with him. Luncheon did not lighten the gloom of the guest, and before they parted, Aldrich, hesitating as he approached the subject and almost stammering, said, "Is there any trouble — anything the matter — besides that story? Because if you are — hard up, you know, I — I can let you have a little money."

Soon after our first meeting in New York I was called to an editorial position in Boston, and for many years I saw him constantly. At least once a week and sometimes every day I called for him toward noon at the office of the *Atlantic* in Park Street, that snug little room, at the head of a narrow winding stairway, which overlooks the Old Granary Burial Ground.

"The Contributors' Club," he said, for my information, using his pipe as an indicator, when I first gazed out on the closely packed tombstones of the fathers and mothers of old Boston.

It always seemed to me that he belonged to other times than our own, and that he had strayed, like a traveller returned, out of an earlier century, the eighteenth or a remoter one. There was something of Herrick in him, something of Sir Philip Sidney, and something of Lovelace. At the latest he would have been at home in the age of Queen Anne. A sword and a cocked hat; ruffles of lace and a coat of lavender velvet, strapped with gold; a doublet of creamy satin, also

frilled and embroidered; knee breeches and silk hose, would have become him better than the quiet clothes he always wore.

Without swagger, he had the swing and gayety of a cavalier; an ancient grace, precise but not solemn; a blithe heart and a habit of seeing things through the airy fancy and high resolves of a still earlier gallantry, even the gallantry of a knight-errant riding through the forest of the world with songs on his lips and a wit as nimble as his sword. And one could imagine him thus, without levity or any sense of the fantastic.

Nor did advancing years stiffen him or rob him of his winsome ease and placid urbanity: these were part of him to the end. Not a bit effeminate, and not illiberal or prudish, he resented, wherever he encountered it, everything that had a suspicion of vulgarity. The humour and the wit of others delighted him and stimulated him while they were refined, but the moment they ceased to be that, his merriment ceased and his disapproval was expressed by a frigidity of manner in sudden contrast to his habitual geniality.

He never seemed to be busy, and could always spare time to relight the slow-burning pipe which he smoked with the insouciance and economy of an Oriental. Whatever the hour, no welcome visitor was dismissed, so far as I could see, and reversing his chair away from his desk, often astride it, he would cheerfully turn his back on manuscripts and proofs, and let the printer's devil wait, regardless of the urgency of his errand. His conversation was even better than his writings, and, like them, crisp, pointed, and inimitably and impressively whimsical. It seemed to be impossible for him to say a commonplace thing, or to say anything that did not

end in some unexpected turn to evoke the smiles or laughter of the listener.

"You've only got to touch him, and he goes off like a Roman candle," Doctor Holmes once said of him to me.

And yet he was a painstaking editor, and sooner or later, in some mysterious way, got through all the work that was so precariously deferred. Not a line was printed that he had not scanned, and to a greater extent than most editors have the patience for, in that round, legible hand of his, which bears so extraordinary a resemblance to Longfellow's, he personally corresponded with even the least important of his contributors, writing treasured letters to them, which, no matter how brief, always had some glint of his abounding and pervasive wit and humour.

After all, he was always a boy until the premature death of his son, which threw unwonted and unfamiliar shadows upon the rest of his days, and dimmed the gayety which hitherto had been inextinguishable. Not withstanding his gayety, he was quickly emotional and spontaneously sympathetic with any unhappiness or misfortune that came to his knowledge. A friend who had complained to him of being depressed received a few hours later what appeared to be a bottle of medicine. It was packed with all a druggist's neatness and precision, in a white wrapper, and duly sealed with red wax. The wrapper removed, a pinkish liquid was discovered, together with written directions: "Tincture of Cocktailia. Shake well before using. A wineglassful to be taken before meals. Dr. Aldrich."

But trifles like that were not the measure of his kindness. He was easily moved, and as ready with service as with sympathy. Among his dearest friends was an

illustrious actor whom he saved from himself in long periods of depression, walking, riding, and rowing with him during the day, and accompanying him to the theatre at night in order to protect him from a gnawing and disastrous appetite. In a measure it was due to his patience and his cheerfulness that ultimately his friend recovered his self-control.

Most of the time Aldrich was not Aldrich to me. In a country newspaper a printer's error had made his name "T. Baldrich," and it so tickled him that as "T. Baldrich" I usually addressed him.

When I was building a country cottage, in which he took as much interest as if it had been his own, we one morning entered a decorator's in Park Street, who showed us a wonderful opalescent window which had in it all the radiance of morning, noon, and evening. It was backed by another sheet of glass on which a ship had been outlined, and against the light she swam in tropic splendour, the colours changing with the hours. Not a result of design, but of an unaccountable accident in the kiln, it was unique, and attempts made to reproduce it had been without success. I asked the price, and we left the shop. A few days later the window was delivered at our cottage, and with it a note from Aldrich hoping that sometimes when we looked at it we might remember a friend.

As a slight return I sent him, the following Christmas, an etching by Pennell, of Trafalgar Square, in which all objects were reversed — St. Martin's Church, for instance, appearing in the west instead of in the east. Aldrich declared himself pleased with this effect. "To correct it I have merely to stand on my head and look between my legs. What if the church *is* upside down?

It is then on the right side of the square, and all my topographical scruples are satisfied."

Confident and even aggressive among intimates, he was curiously shy among strangers, especially in public gatherings of all kinds, and had a strong aversion to speech-making. I remember a great garden party, given by Governor Claflin, at Newton, under the auspices of the *Atlantic*, to celebrate one of the many birthdays of Harriet Beecher Stowe. He was expected to be one of the chief celebrants of the occasion, but he shunned the crowd and moved about the edge of it, until at last we found ourselves out of sight and hearing of it. The master of the ceremonies pursued him, and discovered him like a truant school-boy.

"Here, Aldrich, you must keep your end up! Come on!"

Aldrich was inarticulate and as soon as his pursuer disappeared flew with me for the station. Soon afterward, and long before the ceremonies had ended, we were at his cottage on Lynn Terrace, not hearing speeches or making them, but listening to the breakers tumbling against the rocks of that pleasant sea-side retreat. I suspect that he realized his disgrace: it was not the consequence of any reluctance to do homage to Mrs. Stowe, but rather of his unconquerable dislike of gregariousness and publicity.

Another day I found him walking up and down in front of the door that led from the publishing offices to the almost monastic seclusion of the editorial room. "I am afraid to go in," he confided. "I am afraid they'll laugh at this," he added, touching his brand-new silk hat, a sort of head-gear which I had never seen him in before. There was something of playful

exaggeration in his embarrassment, and yet it was not wholly assumed. He was very boyish.

To the last and in his ripest years he escaped cynicism and apathy. He thought and spoke with undivided feeling from firm, unwavering principles. In many ways he was "old-fashioned" and he deplored — more than deplored — the slap-dash methods which pass without censure in many of the popular books of the day: the ungraceful and untrained plungings of that new school of writers which violates every classic tradition and formula of the literary art, and flings its work at the reader like so many entrails. Perhaps he was too fastidious for his age; and, at all events, whatever others were doing, he persistently lived up to an ideal which appraised moral responsibility at no less a value than the symmetry and orderliness which he strove for and achieved in his own literary art. Stories of mean things and squalid situations repelled him even when they were well told.

Those who listened to him laughed more than he did himself. His funniest things were usually said gravely, and rarely with any more consciousness than a smile or a low chuckle revealed. They were always without premeditation or effort.

We were lunching, as we often did, at Ober's, where at one end of the restaurant there is a bar. A *bon vivant* of our acquaintance appeared and, nodding to us, took a drink and departed. Before we had done he had been in three times. On the third visit Aldrich remonstrated with him: "Look here, B —— I don't believe in you any more. You're nothing but a procession in the Boston Theatre."

He and his boys — the celebrated twins — were walking down Tremont Street, and one of them, pointing

to the window of a surgical instrument shop, asked, "Bric-à-bracs?"

"No, broken backs," Aldrich replied.

Another day he was taking me home with him to the little house in Charles Street, which was filled from top to bottom with rare and beautiful things. We passed through Mount Vernon Street — much more dignified and select then than it is now — and he waved his hand at the substantial houses. "Now," he said, "you are in England. You can imagine the people sitting in the balconies and letting their h's drop with a crack to the pavement below."

All sorts of chances were inspirations to his fancy and cues to his humour. He was describing a very rough voyage he had made from Europe when his eye caught the colossal statue of George Washington in the Public Garden. "Even *that* would have been seasick," he said.

It was impossible to be with him without sharing his high spirits, and he gave more to his friends in his letters and conversation than he reserved for his books. The last time I saw him was at a dinner which we left together on a snowy winter's night. Though he had turned seventy he had preserved the jauntiness and grace of youth. He seemed perennial. I was surprised when in reply to a comment of mine made in all honesty — "Aldrich, you are scarcely changed from what you were thirty years ago"— he shook his head and said in a sad voice, "I feel my years, old fellow."

It was hardly a month later that, in the West Indies, I heard of his death, and, notwithstanding all those seventy years my first feeling, after respect and sorrow was that it had come before its time, and stolen one who was still in his prime.

VIII

EDGAR FAWCETT

SPEAK of Edgar Fawcett to readers below middle age now, and you will find that they know nothing of him. Thirty years ago he was a celebrity and one of the best known figures in New York, a man familiar about town as well as in literary circles, from whom came a steady flow of plays, novels, and books of verse, all of which attracted attention, though opinions as to their merit conflicted and ran to extremes. One often wished that he would produce less or winnow more: his garden needed weeding and his lilies and roses were choked by the unplucked luxuriance of a rank fertility. I never knew a man with less discrimination, and he often saw more beauty in his cabbages than in the most exquisite of his flowers. Much of his poetry was ambitious and the higher the flight attempted the less triumphant was the achievement.

As a friend of mine said: "His longer things I wanted to read only once, but his shorter ones I could read over and over again."

What jewels the shorter ones are! He would not have had it so, but they are the fragments by which his name may be restored and perpetuated when nothing else of his various and copious work endures. I cannot refrain from quoting "To an Oriole" as an example of them:

> How falls it, oriole, thou hast come to fly
> In tropic splendour through our Northern sky?

At some glad moment was it nature's choice
To dower a scrap of sunset with a voice?

Or did some orange tulip, flaked with black
In some forgotten garden, ages back,

Yearning toward Heaven until its wish was heard,
Desire unspeakably to be a bird?

And the reader will not be impatient with one more, which, like the other, shows the daintiness and originality of his fancy and his sense of verbal colour wedded with music:

A HUMMING-BIRD

When the mild gold stars flower out
  As the summer gloaming goes,
A dim shape quivers about
  Some sweet, rich heart of a rose.

If you watch its fluttering poise,
  From palpitant wings will steal
A hum like the eerie noise
  Of an elfin spinning-wheel!

And then from the shape's vague sheen,
  Quick lustres of blue will float,
That melt in luminous green
  Round a glimmer of ruby throat!

But fleetly across the gloom
  This tremulous shape will dart,
While searching for some fresh bloom,
  To quiver about its heart.

Then you, by thoughts of it stirred,
  Will dreamily question them:
"Is it a gem, half bird,
  Or is it a bird, half gem?"

Such things as these he valued lightly. Longer and more laboured things, narrative poems, and five-act

plays in blank verse, the things the public would not have, he gloried in. Oh, Edgar, generous but irascible and unreasonable friend, I quake as I venture on this appraisal! Raise not thy ghostly hands against me. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

I could quote many noble lines of his if there were space, and I think they would gain rather than lose by their detachment. He loved the polysyllabic, the grandiose, and the sonorous. His thought and feeling were often smothered by the decorations in which he framed them.

I imperilled our friendship by candour which went no farther than a gentle hint of redundance; but who is there so modest that, much as he may protest his desire for criticism, does not wince when he gets it? Of something he read to me I confessed my thought that it was redundant, and his reply, impetuous, unyielding, and unapologetic as a defiant child's, was, "William, I love redundancy!"

He had confidence in himself, and that is a possession solacing only so long as it is impassive under the opinion of others who do not believe it to be justifiable. Far from being impassive, Edgar was the most hypersensitive creature I ever knew, except Richard Mansfield, and he let himself be angered even by the gibes of some who were quite unworth his notice. It became a sport to badger him, and he never refused to be drawn, but played the game to the end at his own cost. He wore himself out slapping at gnats and mosquitoes. His lack of discrimination and of the sense of proportion was his greatest weakness, and it involved his friends as well as himself.

What excellence he always discovered in our work,

in which there were no flaws and nothing that could be improved! Our lyrics were as good as "Songs Before Sunrise," our elegiacs comparable with "In Memoriam," our sonnets like Landor's, and our novels — one of them which had a bit of success for a month (where is it now? it vanished like a breath on a mirror) was "better than Thackeray at his best!" We listened with smiles, but were not fatuous enough to be deluded, though we never doubted, nor do I doubt now, that what looked so much like egregious flattery was uttered by him in unquestioning faith and sincerity.

He was commonly spoken of as a poet, but his novels outnumbered his books of verse. At least three of them have documentary value to any student of social conditions in New York, and I think that with the one exception of Howells's "A Hazard of New Fortunes," his "An Ambitious Woman" is the best novel of New York life ever written. It is a record of humanity undistorted by the conventional exigencies of story telling, and satisfying enough without them. The two others —"A Hopeless Case" and "A Gentleman of Leisure"— are slighter, but they also are faithful pictures of their period. "An Ambitious Woman" is, in my opinion, his masterpiece, and neglected as it is now, undeservedly neglected, I feel sure that some day or other it will be recovered. If not sooner, it may turn up in the time to come when revolution has thrown this republic into the hands of a dictator, and the excesses of the dictator have led to a constitutional monarchy. An antiquary exploring the ruins of the public library may pick up a singed and crumpled copy and rejoice in his discovery for the light it will throw on the way some of us lived in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. I recom-

mend others meanwhile to see for themselves how good it is, though probably to the new generation it will already seem old-fashioned.

He knew society, not as an observer from the outside, but as one who has a place in it. Had he chosen he might have given himself up to the glittering but unprofitable waste of fashionable life. He was the son of a gentleman, a substantial scholar, Spencerian in his philosophy, highly cultivated, restless intellectually, urbane in manner and speech, with all the unconscious ease and polish of an assured social position. Nevertheless, his means were small, and he stood in need of the earnings of his pen. Had he been rich his temperament would not have allowed him to be an idler. He seethed with ideas and, travelling or at home, at all hours, early and late, sick or well, he found his chief pleasure in that varied work which flowed from him without intermission, now running clear, and then, as was inevitable, thickening and stumbling in its haste. He always had a note-book in his pocket, and out it came, not for mere memoranda, but for things begun and finished while we waited, such as a sonnet composed within ten minutes of our arrival at the top of the Righi when we were touring together in Switzerland, or another sonnet on Austerlitz (both of them creditable), which he excogitated within as short a time amidst the hubbub of embarkation at Liverpool. Facility was his bane, and overwork his ruin. His querulousness was but the outcry of his abused and protesting nerves, which suffered not only from the number of his working hours but also from the fact that those hours were nocturnal.

I called at his lodgings one day. The floor and the table in his parlour were littered with books pulled from

their shelves the previous night — the books of Tennyson, Swinburne, Keats, Shelley, and Baudelaire, English and French, the books he admired opened at the pages he liked to repeat. The sun creeping through the drawn blinds discovered nothing of the day. Everything betokened the previous night and its occupations, the glasses, the ashes of tobacco, the choice of the books. I surmised congenial company parting only with the dawn — Maurice Barrymore, very likely, Frank Saltus, and George Parsons Lathrop. My resounding knock on the bedroom door had to be repeated before it told. Then a thunderous and indignant voice cried out from within, "Go away. Go away! How dare anybody disturb me at this hour of the night."

I looked in, and there he was in bed, prepared for vengeance on the disturber, furious till he recognized me. A small table within his reach held a pencil and a pad; he had been writing even after that prolonged causerie. He was a handsome man, of florid complexion and jet black hair, with a head and jowl suggestive of tenacity of purpose and obstinacy, beardless but heavily moustached. His eyes in contrast with his other features were like those of a girl's, an exquisite violet.

"Good heavens, William! What's the matter? What has happened to bring you here in the middle of the night?"

I looked at my watch: noon had passed, but the information did not startle him.

"Those fellows stayed quite late," he yawned, and with a smile he handed me the verses he had jotted down before going to sleep:

TO A NEWSPAPER CRITIC

For blood, an adder's gall;
For brain, a gnat's weak hate;

For heart, a pebble small:
For soul, "a whiskey straight."

For conscience, pelf, and hire;
For pride, a donkey's tether;
For ink, a gutter's mire;
For pen, a goose's feather.

He read them himself *ore rotundo*, and they put him in good humour at once.

A meagre breakfast satisfied him, and then, day after day, headache or no headache, after the valeting of a devoted servant, he went forth to work as regularly and persistently as an industrious mechanic, finding both anodyne and stimulant in his appointed task. For his scenes in fashionable life he needed no preparation, and when he was not at his desk he explored the town and its environs in search of material for those humbler scenes and characters which he reproduced with the effect of convincing intimacy.

A wanderer myself, and on a similar mission in those days, I often met him in out-of-the-way places, following, for instance, dusty and squalid funerals over the swamps and sand hills of Greenpoint; in the slums of Mulberry Street and Chatham Square, and among the old Elysian Fields of Hoboken, green and sylvan then, vanished now, where Aaron Burr despatched Alexander Hamilton. You could see him sitting on the benches of Stuyvesant Square and Central Park, usually with a tablet and a pencil in his hands, a dignified and dreamy figure at whom policemen and nursemaids glanced curiously, but without suspicion, while now and then he made pictures for the children who flocked around him, confident that he was their friend and a most accomplished and delightful person.

Poor, tired, impatient, splenetic Edgar! While you were his friend you were superhuman, and he never wearied of proclaiming your excellence. Any criticism of you he resented as vehemently as criticism of himself. You became interested in yourself through his interest in you. He encouraged and inspired you. But unfortunately he took offence easily, and when that happened the little rift within the lute could never be repaired. Old friendships once broken, were broken forever. He could not forgive.

Without effort he was a voluminous correspondent, and even when he was tired he could find relaxation and refreshment in writing to his friends. Out of a bundle of those letters which flowed as easily as his talk I choose a few which illustrate the liveliness of his mind and the variety of his interests.

I had spoken to him about a silly young fellow who had become entangled with a married woman, and this was his reply:

Love is a trickster; he makes us cry out at our wounds, and then flies away, leaving us regretful that they are so suddenly healed. A passion is the most mysterious and delicious thing in the world; it is also the most ridiculous and trivial. Schopenhauer reduces it all to a blind, indeterminate will, which accomplishes its results in plants, animals, and men with an equally reckless tyranny. I don't know that he is not right. Love is so much and so little! I once doted on a girl. I used to take to bed violets that she gave me, and go to sleep with them pressed against my lips. One afternoon I went to see her. She was *distraite* — unwell. I kissed her as men kiss women they would die for, and begged her to tell me why she was so wretchedly *ennuyee*. It was a tooth. She had a bad tooth. My love died, somehow, on the instant. I could never forgive that toothache. If she had committed some dreadful crime I might have forgiven it; but I looked into her mouth and saw a discoloured tooth — and love died!

Love to me is the most sublime and most ludicrous of human sentiments. But thrice fortunate is —— to love as he does. Let him not

bemoan his fate. Let him exult in it, and treasure every pang it gives him. They are all exquisite pangs; they draw him to the very stars themselves; put sweet odours into the oil of his midnight lamp, and line his post-prandial slippers with a fur stolen from the throats of nightingales. Let him appreciate his despair, for its death will leave a more bitter void than its life. Happy the man who can touch a woman's garment inadvertently, and tremble as he does so! The impulse of self-renunciation, the hopeless desire, the stolen meeting, the clandestine kiss — they are worth a whole century of apathetic satiety. Let him be glad while he has the wine to drink; it will soon enough turn to water. Alas! it always *does* turn to water — and sometimes to wormwood! Some day —— will regret his present misery and be willing to give a decade of contentment for a day of its recurrence. He should not fear the wound; it is always a flesh wound. It is the remedy he should dread — cold as death itself — which heals it. The well is flanked with Athenian sculptures; the golden cup hangs over it by a silver chain. Drink, and you thirst no more. But thirst is better. The longer you drink, the more the enchanted forests fade, and suddenly you find that you stand in a gray, blank dawn, drinking from — well, a town pump! And by the way, in America, at least, married women will exact much from their lovers, but never *concede*. They like one on one's knees; they are complaisant, but rarely truly passionate. And they are sometimes strangely treacherous. As a rule they love you at their feet, but when you rise they are too apt to laugh at the way your trousers bag at the knees!

Here is another of pleasant reminiscences:

I have a happier word to say for the second day of the Authors' Readings. Howells and I had a pleasant little chat, and afterward at a dinner party at Courtlandt Palmer's I met Julian Hawthorne and George Lathrop and his wife. At the dinner we all agreed that the Readings had been a great success. Howells was admirable. On second day he read a passage or chapter from what he told us was an "unwritten novel." The humour was even better and more gently persuasive than on the previous day. It was very interesting to me to note how its quiet yet keen points "took" when delivered behind the footlights. It confirmed a theory of mine that American audiences are anxious for good literary things in the theatre. Augustin Daly is with me, here, and yet not *quite* with me. . . . If you or any of the few artists like you, chose to do anything fresh in comedy for Daly, you would be sure of a most appreciative and courteous welcome. He wrote me the other day from Philadephia: If you do a comedy for me this summer you

shall suffer no loss. Is not that nice? — But I somehow feel that I am losing what slight power I ever had. Late midnight writing kills me, and day-writing seems to cast a critical glare upon my work, emphasizing its worst faults. . . . Mark Twain was immense at the Readings The house was in continuous roars while he spoke. Beecher was the only poor one; he read, and read in a hesitant, senile, almost maundering way. At the Irving dinner he had made so brilliant a speech that I was prepared to be charmed on Wednesday. "*Non omnis moriar*" applies to him! — and yet *does* it? He will not wholly die, yet will he live longer than to the end of this century? His gifts are oratoric, and he has no *litera scripta*. Those are what tell in the matter of immortality. John Boyle O'Reilly simply charmed me. Don't you like him very much? I had never seen him before, and he impressed me as so handsome, so graceful, so full of fire and force. He read some very brilliant and poetic epigrams, and a long, sombre, but occasionally very eloquent poem called "The City Streets." He rushed off in the middle of the entertainment, or I should certainly have sought an introduction to him. Lady Wilde raved over him in London, and I can understand it. I think Lytton's poem ("Glenaveril") perfectly awful! Not a ray of the old sweet, dulcet-voiced Owen Meredith in it! (Pardon my hash of metaphors!) It is laboured, forced, and ridiculous in its diatribe against all the Liberals and its eager exaltation of the Jingoes. The idea of putting Lord Salisbury above Gladstone! But the poem, in other ways, is essentially artificial and shallow. I never was more disappointed in my life. *Quantum mutatus ab illo, &c.*

His rhymed satire, "The Buntling Ball," had flared into popularity and it was soon followed by another book in the same dancing Gilbertian measure.

I shall now tell you what I have not told you before. Besides a number of short stories and six or seven poems, I wrote this summer "The New King Arthur," and *two new comedies for Daly!* The first of these, "Thin Ice," he sat down on so mercilessly, demanding such radical alterations, that I hopelessly threw it aside. The second, "Swains and Sweethearts," he likes better, but has just written me that I must invent two new, original, and startling situations in it for the ends of first and second acts (it is three acts in all) before he will contract for it. And even then the whole play must be gone over, with changes which he will indicate! Well, what can I do but try to satisfy him? Besides, I don't know that he is not perfectly right. He ought to be, with his immense experience. I wrote him to-day that I would do all I could — whatever that may mean. I know

him so well that I can read between the lines of his last letter, and perceive that S. & S. has in a manner "caught on" with him. But don't you pity me, dear boy, in the distracting task which yet remains to be accomplished?

The truth is, the way of the American dramatist is bitterly hard beyond all recognized calculation. It is not merely that he must fight the European and English market, squarely and fairly. He must, indeed, do considerably more than this. He must fight the *best work* of the best authors now across the Atlantic — work that has been thoroughly tried on transpontine audiences and not found wanting in any essential of solid popularity. Is it not disheartening? You've no idea, dear William, of the immense "survival of the fittest" which goes on with Daly in the production of such plays as "Love on Crutches," "A Night Off," "The Passing Regiment," &c., &c. I myself have seen the stacks and piles of translated plays which he possesses. Hundreds scarcely express their quantity. Everything is sent him that Berlin or Vienna sees — and those two cities have not the long runs of London, Paris, and New York. Besides this, the Vienna comedy-theatre (I forget its German name, which you probably remember) is considered by many people superior to the *Comedie Francaise*. This is the sort of pick that Daly has. Why the deuce should my plays stand any chance with him, or with anybody?

Yet Daly, in his way, is fair and just and discriminating beyond all other New York managers, and I firmly believe (indeed, I *know*) that he would rather put on an American success than a foreign one. Still, he must go according to his lights, whether they are torches or tallow dips.

I myself am as utterly humble about my dramatic work as it is possible to conceive. I have tested the tremendous chance of the whole thing, and cannot, however much I rack my poor brain, hit upon any ghost of a mathematical formula by means of which the public is to be hit. "The False Friend" was a pure stroke of luck. I see that now, tho' I didn't then. Because Cazauran cut and slashed it, gutting whole scenes, this was no reason why it should take. For Cazauran's judgment, in the "Fatal Letter," in "Far from the Madding Crowd," and in several other things which he did for the Union Square Theatre after Palmer left it, has been proved thoroughly fallible. Ah, well! if it were not for the big rewards attendant upon a successful play, who would dream of writing one? That, however, is the very thing, I fancy, which is preventive of good plays being written here — that, and the monstrous extraneous pressure of foreign preferment.

In another he was, at my request, autobiographical.

I remember so well my first appearance in print. It occurred at Rye before I was graduated from college; I think in 1865. My father had for

some time taken the deepest interest in Spiritualism (a "fad," by-the-by, which he never entirely outgrew, and which haunted him, in a disappointed, half-disillusioned way, even to the hour of his death), and he had for some time subscribed to the *Banner of Light*. You recollect the paper, perhaps? It was the jeer of my mother and sisters, who were never tired of reminding my father, with ironies either direct or covert, that he had put himself under its rather disreputable *ægis*. It abounded in "trance lectures" and in "communications" from spectral celebrities like Poe, Shelley, and for all I know even your own beloved Thackeray. Well, one day I wrote a copy of verses beginning,

> Of all the months in the happy year,
> No fitter birth-month could he choose
> When May smiles out from April's tear,
> And blossoms in her countless hues. . . .

I forget the rest, but "he" was a baby, born in the first stanza under these highly flowery circumstances, and dying in the last stanza under, if I mistake not, the most sombrely autumnal ones. In fear and trembling, dreaming only of fame and not at all of pelf, I sent my verses as a contribution to the *Banner of Light*, accompanying them with some sort of pseudonym. A week or two later they appeared, and on my word of honour as a confirmed scribbler, the joy and thrilling pride which I felt when I saw them has never since been equalled. I know how commonplace this is; every author is always saying the same thing whenever he becomes biographical. But I can't resist recording those feelings, nevertheless, of my own especial juvenile case. I regarded the publication of those verses as a great state secret. Nobody must know of it. And so, like the silly ostrich that I was, I hid my head in the sand with a vengeance; I tore, or cut, the little poem from the paper. My father came up from town, eager for his treasured *Banner*. The mutilated page filled him with inquiries, and I fear somewhat irritated ones. Some one had seen me clutching a *Banner of Light* agitatedly and hurrying off with it. Circumstantial evidence crushed me. There was the mangled cherry tree, and the culpable little G. W. was not far off. And so, with tears of haughty shame, I was forced at once to confess my theft, and my distinction. I recall thinking the latter a disclosure far too lightly valued. But from that hour I was a marked boy; I had not merely made verses; I had got them into print. As you know, I have never lived down the odium; it has clung to me most adhesively for over twenty unconscionable years.

IX

MARK TWAIN AND E. C. STEDMAN

TWO later friends of mine were Mark Twain and E. C. Stedman.

For several months "Mark," as his intimates were allowed to call him, lived at The Players in one of the two best rooms, which had been occupied at the opening of the club by Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett; and I, then the managing editor of the *North American Review*, went there one morning to ask him whether he would write an article for us on the origin of the most famous of his stories — "The Celebrated Jumping Frog." We were fellow members, and I had already known him several years.

He pointed amiably to a chair, in which I sat while he paced the floor and puffed at a slow-burning pipe, using it much as an artist uses a brush or his hand in swings and curves when he describes the tremendous things he intends to do with an almost untouched canvas. He talked more slowly than usual — I never heard him talk fast — and at intervals stopped altogether, now resting midway, then striding from wall to wall, shaking his head at what he disagreed with or nodding in concurrence.

All the typographical dashes in the printer's case would be insufficient if I used them to indicate the long-drawn pauses between his words and sentences. Every syllable was given its full value, distinctly and sonorously.

To me his voice was beautiful. It was not a laughing voice, or a light-hearted voice, but deep and earnest like that of one of the graver musical instruments, rich and solemn, and in emotion vibrant and swelling with its own passionate feeling.

"I didn't write that story as fiction," he said, after a delay, tirelessly but slowly moving his head from side to side; "I didn't write it as fiction," he repeated in the way he had of repeating everything he desired you to understand he stood by, and that there could be no mistake about, "I wrote it ——"

To and fro again and a sweep of his arm. A pause in the middle of the room.

"I wrote it as — not as fiction, not as fancy, not out of imagination — I wrote it as a matter, a matter of h-i-s-t-o-r-y. I can remember now at this very minute, I can remember now, right here, just how that story happened, every incident in it."

Here there was another pause, as if the curtain had been drawn on an interlude in a play. He never under any circumstances was precipitous, or to be driven. Nobody could ever hasten him out of his excogitations. His face was serious, reflective, and reminiscent. That was its prevalent expression. I knew him for nearly thirty years, and cannot remember hearing him laugh in all that time, even when he must have been amused and others were laughing around him — Howells, for instance, bubbling with the freshest, merriest, sincerest and most contagious laugh in the world; Howells, who, though so different in many ways, was one of the dearest and most congenial of his friends, Howells and Aldrich, both of whom he especially delighted in. A smile, an engaging, communicative, penetrative smile,

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KELP ROCK, NEWCASTLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

which wrapped one in its own liquid and suffusing satisfaction, was his nearest approach to risibility, save perhaps a shrug or a scarcely audible chuckle.

I could see that some unexpected thing was coming, while I listened to those clear but halting sentences, which dropped from him like pebbles breaking the silence of a lonely pool. His face, that aquiline, almost accipitral face, was as grave as if life and death had been in the balance.

"Well," he drawled, "what do you suppose happened last night? Don't be in a hurry. It's no good being in a hurry."

I did not venture a guess, and he emitted a cloud from the reviving pipe as if to symbolize the impenetrability of his mystery. Again he paced the room before he explained himself.

"A fellow sitting next to me at dinner last night said to me, 'How old do you suppose that story of yours about the Jumping Frog is, Mark?' I stopped to think, quite in earnest, and I said, recalling all the circumstances, 'That story is just about forty-five years old. It happened in Calaveras County in the spring of 1840.' 'No, it isn't,' said he, 'no, it isn't. It's more than that; it's two thousand years old.' And since then that fellow has shown me a book, a Greek text-book, and there it is, there it is, my Jumping Frog, in Bœotia t-w-o t-h-o-u-s-a-n-d years ago."

Two thousand years never seemed so long to me, nor could they have sounded longer to anybody than they did in his enunciation of them, which seemed to make visible and tangible all the mystery, all the remoteness, and all the awe of that chilling stretch of time. His way of uttering them and his application of them often

gave the simplest words which he habitually used a pictorial vividness, a richness of suggestion, a fulness of meaning with which genius alone could endue them.

The mystery of the Bœotian was soon solved. He had been translated into the Greek text-book by Prof. Henry Sidgwick, Mr. Balfour's brother-in-law, and History was restored to the pedestal on which she had tottered. I got the article I wanted, and a very good price was paid for it.

Mark was not an easy contributor to manage. He knew his own value, and had no unbusiness-like indifference to the substantial recognition of it by editors and publishers. He would have his pound of flesh, and insisted on it as strongly as he insisted that no changes should be made in what he wrote, though occasionally elisions would have saved him from the criticisms of fastidious readers, especially from the criticisms of women. I believe the only critic he ever listened to with patience, and respected and obeyed, was his wife. How mistaken were the people who, not knowing him, imagined that everywhere and on all occasions his attitude and point of view were those of the jester! I never knew a more earnest man than he was, or one whose aroused indignation was so overwhelming. When anger moved him you could see his lean figure contract and his eyes ominously screw themselves into their sockets. Every fibre in him quivered, and for the moment his voice became acid and sibilant and out of tune — almost a whine. Then he would let himself out in a break, like that of a dam unable to hold the flood, in language as candid and unshrinking as the vernacular of the Elizabethans. Epithet would be piled on epithet, one following another with cumulative vigour and distinctness,

and the disclosing and illuminative effect of explosives. And not a word missed its mark, not a word seemed superfluous or exchangeable for any other word; each fitted the use he made of it as a cartridge fits a rifle or a revolver; each told. When he disliked anybody or anything, whether it was the Czar, General Funston, Leopold of Belgium, apologists for Shelley, or the Reverend Mr. Sabin, whose refusal to bury an actor led to the glory of "The Little Church Round the Corner," he would not compromise or extenuate what offended him for months or years afterward, if at all. It took years to soften the bitterness which while fresh was implacable. Nor were his animosities without justification. Hypocrisy, deceit, sanctimoniousness, and cruelty were among the cardinal sins for him. You might think he had forgotten particular instances of them, but he would surprise you by springing them back on your memory, in moods and circumstances to which they had no relation, in biting phrases which showed how they still rankled.

His attitude toward the ordinary foibles of humanity was parentally indulgent and benevolent. He admired women and met them with all the grace and complaisance of an ancient courtier, and he loved children and all things simple, beautiful, and true. His affability exposed him to flocks of bores, and out of sheer courtesy he would endure them and hide his impatience while they flattered themselves that they were impressing him and establishing an intimacy, the legend of which should be boasted of while they lived and cherished by all their descendants when they were gone. He would smile on them, wag his head and murmur acquiescence in their talk, and when he at last released himself by some ingenious strategy or through the intervention of

a friend, who had been watching his unmistakable and comically pitiful signs of weariness, they would fly off to repeat what he hadn't said or jumble what he had, and ever thereafter speak of him as "Mark." It was a lesson in saintly fortitude to observe him and hear the unfathomable sigh which came out on his escape from them.

Usually there was no end to his patience, but I remember his losing it at a little dinner given at The Players, when by some mischance he was seated next to an impossible person, a guest, not a member of the club, who may be called Bounder. Bounder gave him no rest, but Clemens stood the strain for a long time without a protest, and merely swayed his head in the leisurely, half-drowsy, ponderous way an elephant has. That was another little peculiarity of his. Some of us could see that his restraint could not last much longer, however, and presently he beckoned the host, much to that gentleman's bewilderment, into the ante-room.

"David," he said when he got him there, "David — do you love me, David?" His voice quavered with pathos; it was a voice that always had more pathos in it than mirth: it shook with the melancholy of trees in the wind, and pleaded. As I have already intimated, it was seldom he revealed any consciousness of his own humour. "Do you love me, David?"

David was the late Mr. David Alexander Munro, a close and dear friend of his and of all of us. "Love you? Of course I do, old boy. What's the matter?"

"Then, for the love of heaven, if you love me, save me from Bounder, save me from Bounder, save me from Bounder!" repeated thrice, like the tragic wail of a

soul doomed and immured in the nethermost depths of despair.

Difficult explanations had to be made, and another than Mark sacrificed for the rest of the evening to the confident and voluble Mr. Bounder.

He always conveyed to me the sense of music; not lively music *con vivace*, but the slower movements like the *andante* of a symphony. There were exquisite cadences in his voice, and his gestures harmonized with them. He did not sparkle as Aldrich sparkled; he glowed. Have you seen Vesuvius when quiescent, throbbing in the dark, its ruddy fire diminishing one moment and the next burning scarlet like the end of a Gargantuan cigar? In that one could find by a stretch of fancy a resemblance to his passages from coolness to heat. He was more like a frigate than a torpedo boat, and he deliberated before he touched his guns

He confessed to me once that at gatherings when speech-making was expected, he preferred to do his part after others had done theirs, for what was said before made opportunities for him later on. An instance of this occurred at a breakfast in London given during his last visit to England. Augustine Birrell, the Irish secretary, preceded him, and referring to the demands made on him in what is probably the most irritating and laborious of all parliamentary offices, declared, "I am sure I don't know how I got here."

That gave Clemens the chance he had waited for, and he lost no time in making the most of it. No other American who ever visited London received half the applause bestowed on him; not Henry Ward Beecher, Doctor Holmes, General Grant or even Mr. Choate.

"Mr. Birrell," he began very slowly and with a more

expansive smile than usual, "Mr. Birrell has just said he doesn't know how he got here." Then he bent over the Irish secretary, and looked into his wine glasses. "Doesn't know how he got here" — very significantly. Mr. Birrell was puzzled behind his spectacles, and everybody was on the *qui vive* just as the speaker liked to have them; it was a part of his game.

"Well, he hasn't — had — anything —" a prolonged pause —"anything — more to — drink — since he came, and we'll at least see that he gets home all right."

The inflection breathed encouragement; it said by implication what many more words could not have said better, that Mr. Birrell was in the hands of a self-sacrificing friend who would look out for him. It surely was not the sort of humour they were used to, but bishops in their frocks, deans, cabinet ministers, and judges — they, as well as the rest of us, yielded to it in uncontrollable laughter, while the speaker demurely shook his head as if he were compassionating the frailty of humanity. Nor was this the sort of humour, accepted though it was as the essence of him, by which he should be measured. Sunshine in water is not a gauge of its depths. Only those who knew him well discovered his profundity, and how impassioned and militant (a little quixotic, too,) he could be in good causes.

I don't know how Stedman could have ever had an enemy, though he was an outspoken and combative man of strong opinions. You might differ with him — sometimes you had to — but you came out of an encounter with him probably second-best, yet amused and laughing rather than hurt or resentful. You respected his convictions, and could not fail to admire the vehemence with which he declared them and fought for them.

Most of his convictions were enthusiasms, if closely analyzed, and he happily found the swans outnumbering the geese in the world around him.

If you were his friend that was enough to prove excellence of some kind already in existence, and to justify the most flattering horoscopes of greater excellencies in the future. Was your son going to sea? Then he was sure to become a Farragut. In the army, a Grant. In science, a Darwin or a Tyndall. In literature, a Hawthorne, a Poe, a Prescott, or a Lowell. And you! What encouragement he always gave — finding some grace or subtlety of imagination in your little story, or felicitous cadences in your little poem, which others neither perceived nor heard! He was, like Fawcett, much too kind to be a good critic of those he knew, and yet in his praise there was no taint of the conscious flattery which speaks to please, with a tongue in its cheek. Of things hopeless he was silent, of things imperfect but not without merit he selected what was best and expatiated on that, shutting his eyes to the less admirable or altogether valueless remainder, like one who with a tray of jewels of various qualities before him says not what he thinks of the whole, but, ignoring the spurious and defective, picks out for approval the one or two pieces which he knows to be right.

Never had any man more sympathy with youth and ambition; nor was it passive sympathy, but the sympathy which patiently proves itself in such practical service as the surrender of time for reading and counsel.

One of the penalties of fame, I surmise, is the number of one's followers. Every tyro hurries his first book, more precious to him than a first child — his heart and soul breathing between its covers — as an offering from below

to the oracle on the summit, and alas! often changes his opinion and recants his faith when that oracle, too busy or too bored, makes no reply. The oracle may mean well and wish well, and try to do what is desired of him, but the offerings come in such profusion that they fill the temple and threaten to suffocate the receiver. No one could have been busier than Stedman, no one could have withstood as he did the multiple strains of business and literature that he was subject to all his life. As is well known, he was for many years a member of the Stock Exchange, and could enter his study only after a trying day's struggle in that maelstrom which, as it regurgitates, leaves men of mightier brawn than his limp and exhausted. Learned societies, national societies, and philanthropic societies besought him for speeches or official services, and, tired though he was, he yielded to their persuasion. Calamity befell him with a destructive weight and poignancy which made his survival seem scarcely less than miraculous. Nothing could extinguish his splendid spirit, nothing impeded his unfaltering activity and energy, and up to the last it was seldom that any little book ever reached him, utterly unknown though its author might be, which he did not look at to see if there was not somewhere in its drab a thread of gold that he could recognize in a letter of acknowledgment — one of those crisply-penned, gothic-handed letters, which he poured out like a man, or more like a woman, shut up in a wilderness of remoteness and seclusion and seeking relief in intimacy and communication.

A mere acknowledgment —"I shall read it with great pleasure," or the old equivocation "I shall lose no time in reading it"— is usually as much as the shaky sender of the virgin pages expects or gets. Imagine then what

it meant to him to receive one of Stedman's letters, as he was sure to do if he had any promise or gift at all, showing that the book, moist from the press, had been read from the first line to the last, and sifted for what was good in it and not for what was bad, and that a master high on Parnassus had caught in it the gleam of a jewel, the scent of a flower, or a ripple of melody!

Time and time again young fellows have come to me flushed with pride, firmer on their feet and with strengthened confidence, because each had in his pockets, or more likely in his hands, such a letter from Stedman, which he pressed me to read while he watched its effect on me with the expression which needed no speech for its interpretation: "What do you say to *that?* That's what *he* thinks of it. Now, perhaps, *you'll* be civil." And civil one had to be; it would have been unkind to reduce by a single degree the glow of what was so plainly regarded as marking the matriculation of the poet from his shell. One danger the happy youth was liable to, however. He might meet another of his own sort and, showing the letter to him have it matched by another letter which the second youth had himself received from Stedman. In such a contingency values fell, and both poets probably decided that in the other's case Stedman had lost his usual perspicacity and overdone the praise.

One night at The Players, Stedman complained of the burden of letter-writing imposed on him by young authors.

"Isn't it your own fault?" It was his own fault, and I added, "You've always been prodigal in that way."

He swooped down upon me like a thunder-bolt, as though he would annihilate me there and then, blameless

as I knew myself to be. One had to be used to him to endure his impetuous rushes without losing one's breath. The word "aquiline" might have been made for him: it describes his features and his temperament. As he descended, the shock would stagger, unless one knew enough from past experience to be reassured that, however strongly the wings might beat, talons and beak would not be used.

"*You* are the fellow who is responsible for that!" he cried. "You've been spreading that story about me nearly all your life, and see what it's done for me! Every fellow that lisps sends his book to me."

His eyes flashed reproach and he thumped the table. He seemed to gather himself together for a spring at me, and the next moment he laughed and shook his head — not at me, but at himself.

"Well, I suppose I am a fool to do it; but it's astonishing what a lot of good work those boys are doing."

What a superb head it was, so handsome, so massive and so noble! While he was active and unbent, with the step, the gaze, the complexion, and the uprightness of a young man, his beard and the hair of his head were as silvery as sunlit snow. He seemed like a youth made up for Santa Claus or for a mosaic patriarch of incredible years.

One night at the same club Mark Twain was lamenting his own frostiness.

"You haven't got a single gray hair," he said to one of us, nodding pathetically. "And you only two or three, and you — well, not many," indicating each of us in turn. "Not one of you is like me, *all* white, no other colour."

Then he braced up with the cheerfulness drawn from

the comparison. "But if Stedman were only here I'd look like a boy," and with that thought his mood changed.

The familiar epigram repeats itself: "The only people who have no time to spare are those who have nothing to do." Stedman had time for everything. Even in the old Stock Exchange period, when other brokers could barely spare ten minutes for a sandwich, he would have little luncheon parties at his office, and there, with all the noises of Wall Street and Broad Street splashing in through the open windows in warm weather, the bellowings of prices from the hot and struggling mob on the floor, and the chimes of Trinity playing "Rock of Ages," one could meet R. H. Stoddard, Charles Dudley Warner, Aldrich, Edgar Fawcett, Gilder, and other literary and artistic friends of his, as they talked with him of the latest things from Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Swinburne. Strange and dramatic contrasts are not uncommon in that sordid neighbourhood, but nothing could have been more surprising or incongruous than that band of poets engaged in chaff and criticism — Stoddard brusque and sledge-hammerish (the blacksmith he had been still asserting himself in his manner); Gilder, with his fawn-like eyes, glowing with enthusiasm; Fawcett, elegant, appealing, and inquisitive; Aldrich, provocative and full of laugh-making quips, and the host mercurial, emphatic, and plain of speech. They might have been picnicking on Parnassus beyond the reach of other sounds than their own voices and the interludes of Pan.

At this time, too, Stedman's business was large and pressing, and he was acquiring one of those fortunes which were afterward lost through no fault of his own.

I met him one day on the steps leading into the Exchange.

"What are you doing here?" he said. "Can't you read the inscription up there: 'All hope abandon ye who enter here.' No, it's not quite that, but it ought to be."

"And you?" I asked.

"Oh, we have just finished eating our house," he replied, with a shrug, meaning, of course, that he had got to the end of money raised on some of his real estate.

But he was always cheerful and always generous. Never was there a more dapper figure than his, so military in its bearing, so upright, so compact, so alert, so well groomed, and so compliant to the latest fashions. There was no Tennysonian untidiness about him, no proclamation of the poetic scorn of convention. You could easily have mistaken him for somebody distinguished in the army; that would have been your earliest and most convincing inference; that, or a guess that he might be a benevolent and refined plutocrat with a leaning toward art and books. He had every social grace, and society wanted him and courted him, but he preferred the company of his fellow literary men and women. I have said how at a little dinner of authors he, glowing at the end of it, exclaimed: "Haven't we had a good time! We are never so happy as when we are among ourselves!"

Blow after blow fell upon him without disabling him or disheartening him. Stunned, he recovered. Out of darkness the sun reappeared in roseate dawns. The disappointments of to-day left a keener appetite for what was sure to come to-morrow. The past might gloom, but the future glittered. He was full of ingenious projects, and talked them up to the skies, filling those who listened with his own confidence and buoyancy. Any hint that

there might be difficulties in the way was impatiently derided, and it would have been better for the utterer of it to have held his tongue.

When Stedman chose New Castle, N. H., for a summer home, some of his friends thought it would be rather inconvenient for him if he had to make such frequent trips to New York as he expected. But he would not have it so. The journey to Boston, and then across Boston, and then to Portsmouth, seemed much too far to us for frequent repetitions. But it was not long at all to him. He avowed that it was one of the easiest things in the world: his imagination produced a special timetable for him, and even built an air-line which, though it never materialized for others, served him and pleased him as if it had cut the distance in halves. That was his way. He touched things with a wand of fairydom, and lo! for him and for us they were transformed into whatever we most desired them to be.

What a house it was which his romance and poetry found expression in on that rocky shore where the Piscataqua meets the open sea and the Isles of Shoals mingle with the mirage of opaline mornings! So solid, so weathered, so appropriate to its surroundings! It looks as if it had stood there forever; as if its stains had come through the wear of ages; as if the sea and wind had spent themselves upon it century after century, making it their own and endowing it with natural dignity and ruggedness. It might have been upheaved out of the gray bowlders among which it is rooted; and, indeed, unmissed from the tumbled strand, many of them have gone into it. The shingles might have been split from driftwood drawn hither and thither from the equator to the poles. One could not, with much ingenuity, pic-

ture a more ideal home for a poet, and he loved it and let his fancy run free in its shelter. He had a den in which one became possessed by the spirit of ancient days. The ghosts of smugglers, pirates, and buccaneers floated in clouds of tobacco after dark; and while the wind shook the sash, and the waves splashed and moaned on the beach, and we rattled off old ballads and romances, a kettle would be hung from a crane over the open hearth, its promise confirmed by lemons and sugar. Then he would stealthily fetch from a mysterious locker an antique demijohn, full, not of vulgar gin, brandy,or whiskey, but of honest rum, which, judging from its mildness and flavour, might have been left there by the salty wraiths who in the flesh one easily believed had come and gone on many tides for contraband adventures.

No aeronaut ever yet scaled the air and trafficked with the stars as he did in his sanguine flights. One of the last times I encountered him was late one evening in Gramercy Park, when he was coming away from, and I going into, The Players. He at once proposed a *magnum opus* — I had heard of others — that should make the fortunes of both of us, but I could see that something was weighing on him. Did I know that "Dick" Stoddard was dying? Kinder words were never spoken of Stoddard than at that moment, and Stedman was on his way to sit up the night with him. The errand of love, with all its urgency, must have been momentarily diverted. We — my wife and I — had just come to town to embark for Italy the next day, and when I later returned to the hotel a great bunch of roses bore witness that even in gloom and distraction his thoughts omitted none of the graceful things he abounded in.

He was a generous letter writer, and the reader may be interested in examples, the first referring to a biographical sketch of him for which I was then gathering material.

Kelp Rock, New Castle, Sept. 28, 1887.

Dear Mr. Rideing:

There are drawbacks even in living on an island, you know, *e. g.*: Chas. Reade's castaway lovers, on Godsend Island (see "Foul Play"), had no parson handy — else they would have wedded and bedded. (Indeed they came near to the latter — since the former was impossible — and I always was vexed that the search steamer hove in sight at the thrilling moment!) A drawback here, then, is that one sometimes runs out of letter-paper, then has to fall back on his MS. quarto-post, as in the present instance, which pray excuse.

We were glad to make your better acquaintance, though your visit was done as soon as begun. "I only know" that, like the poet's infant, you "came and went"— and that I drove to Portsmouth & back on three successive days. Literally, a flying visit. It now occurs to me that, after all, you got nothing of what you came for — *i. e.*, nothing to help you, outside of your own artistic handling & imagination, to make any sort of a paper about the boyhood of my uninteresting self. In T. B. A.'s case, you had the best boy's story ever written — and, now I think of it, for scrapes and experiences, my own "bad-boyhood" was about the same as his own, & in very near a second " Rivermouth."

I had thought of nothing to tell you. And what does one know of what he *really* was & seemed as a boy? Those who then tended him are the ones to cross-examine. There are still folks in old Norwich —(pronounced Norridge — to rhyme with porridge, *vide* "Mother Goose") who could tell much more of my unusual and perverse boyhood than I can myself.

But I do recall that you asked me who were my friends and mates, & that I only mentioned my fishing, trapping, hunting, with Ira. But I did have, after all, more boys *with* me, daily, than is usual outside of boarding school. My great-uncle & guardian had a reputation for managing boys, & there were many reared & educated in his house. Three pairs of us were there during my stay — from my sixth to my fifteenth year — after which I was transferred to Yale. Three pairs of brothers — Smilio & Virgilio Lesaga (Cubans), Hunt & Turville Adams,Edmund & Charles Stedman; the elder brother in each case two years older than the younger, and each three the same age. We were a rather important and dominant sextette in the

town — not a place for nutting, berrying, etc., that we did not know & forage in; not a scrape or adventure in which we did not unite. I was a little the oldest of the lot, & probably the leader. Certainly I presented all the petitions to the old gentleman, got credit for all the scrapes, & got most of the thrashings — deservedly, I doubt not, for the others hadn't my imagination, adventurous turn, rebellious independence. I was a great inventor of stories — a raconteur — we slept four in a room; I had to manufacture tales for the rest after the candle was out. The faculty left me as I grew up. Are novelists, then, examples of "arrested development?"

In my childhood, in Plainfield, N. J., I was under an old man, my Grandfather Dodge — a stern old Puritan and disciplinarian. Afterward, under my grand old Uncle Stedman, a fine scholar, noble heart, but also rigid in old-fashioned ways. He taught me Latin, Greek; made me his companion in his law-office, his gardening, his little farm; I daresay loved me more than he showed — as his own sons had not taken to the scholarly studies he still cared for. But we were often at open war. I now deeply regret that I was not old enough, or sensible enough, to understand him at his worth. My constant scrapes & rebellion must have tried him beyond measure. But I always was the natural companion of old men — old scholars — and born with a reverence for them. Years afterward I was the friend & private secretary of that fine old Roman, Edward Bates — and was to him all I ought to have been to James Stedman of Norwich Town.

We lived in Norwich Town (two miles from the city), the hive of the Huntingtons, Trumbulls, Perkinses, Hydes, & the birthplace of Benedict Arnold. The quaintest colonial town in New England — full of old customs & traditions. Curfew — 9 P. M.— for centuries. Thanksgiving celebrated as nowhere else in New England. Thanksgiving night, bonfires — barrels strung on masts 60 feet high — stolen & begged by gangs of boys, from the different districts — for months before.

Am pretty sure I was, though small, tough, and the captain of my set of boys. Cannot remember ever being afraid. Never undertook a thing, good or — I am sorry to say — bad, that I did not carry through at any expense of labour or suffering.

I was a wretched and despised hand at any games without a secondary motive. Couldn't play ball, for instance. Was a splendid swimmer, a good runner, & jumper, a poor fighter & always fighting, a good sportsman.

From my earliest remembrance I made poetry. All of the Clevéland blood do — bad cess to them! I was a natural writer, an insatiate reader — specially of fiction, adventure, poetry. Of course I got hold of all the great boys' books, of the Robinson Crusoe type; read by stealth the "Arabian Nights" & "Fairy Tales" & believed them. Went alone over the wood-

lands, in early years, hoping to meet some Genie or Fairy. Did not believe in the terrors of the Calvinism about me. Had to learn the Shorter Catechism, most of the Bible, &c., &c., go to church three times Sunday.

My earliest poet, Scott. Afterward, got hold of Byron, & Shakespeare of course. Then Coleridge, Shelley, & Keats, developed my sense of the beautiful & spiritual in poetry. The only thing for which I have to thank my step-father, Mr. T ——, was his drawing my attention to Wordsworth — of whom he was a student. I was then 15. Then came along Tennyson, etc., naturally.

Looking back, I can see that, while among kindred who did their duty faithfully, I was in the worst possible atmosphere for a boy like myself to get the right — *i. e.*, the *indicated* — training. Doubtless, my strongest traits were, first, an inborn & passionate love of beauty — of the beautiful. I was eager to draw, to learn music, &c., & was restricted to my "studies"; secondly, a love of adventure; third, love of nature & books in equal proportions.

'Tis a bad thing to separate a child from his mother, & from his natural habitat.

Finally, I was always in love with one little girl, & with larger ones as I grew larger. Don't think any of them cared for me, except the heroine of "The Door Step" & "Seeking the Mayflower."

There, I never have thought, certainly never have talked, so much of myself before. After all, there is nothing to tell. I see the impossibility of your making anything of what I told you; & I see that this effort at a supplement is just as futile. But I pitied you so much, as one having to make bricks without straw, that I have made an attempt to give you something from which, without exactly using any of my garrulous words, you may glean some fodder.

The dates of some of my earliest passable poems are under the head, "Poems Written in Youth," in that Household Edition. They show a natural ear — of course, little originality.

Sincerely yours,

EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

Mrs. Stedman & Mrs. S., Jr. say they hope you'll come again — & to enjoy yourself, as we saw just enough of you to make us wish for more.

44 East 26th St., Tuesday, Dec. 18th, 1887.

MY DEAR RIDEING —

What a hearty fellow you are! It is worth while, after experiencing the frequent anguish of bungling & ill-bred newspaper itemizing, to be praised

for what one feels *may* be worth praising — if any of his work is — and in the cleverest weekly letter that comes to this mart, and with the voice whose sound is honest. I had put your note of the 14th by, for a Sunday morning answer, & here I must begin by thanking you for quite touching my heart by your remembrance & opinion of my former Whittier poem. Well, that blank verse really came from the heart, I suspect — and wasn't it Longfellow who said that,

"The heart
Giveth grace to every art?"

Now as to the poets & the Kinder. If you talk with Dick Stoddard, when you come on here, he — who is very learned in the records and of poets' lives, especially English poets — would be of genuine service to you. I have written my sister to ask for some reminiscences of her girlish acquaintance with the Brownings, but don't know whether she will give me any. What does come to my memory at once is a charming thing for you to quote — & doubtless it is in your mind as well. I mean the pretty "Line to My New Child Sweetheart," of Tom Campbell's, beginning —

I hold it a religious duty
To live & worship children's beauty—

and they would work in somewhere, perhaps in your Prelude to your series. Swinburne is the greatest lover & laureate of children of all modern poets I know. He has told me so — his friends have been mostly the very young & the very old — of the latter, Landor, Trelawney, etc. You know his book, "A Century of Roundels"? I *could* write a paper about the friendship of young girl-poets & scholars for old men, *e. g.*—Ascham & Jane Grey, Hugh Boyd & Miss Barrett — but I can't recall anything that would help you as to poets and children.

Yes — you have caught an Aztec goddess in your remarkable photograph of our town. Now write a legend of her career and fate!

Sincerely yours,
E. C. Stedman.

X

SOME BOSTON MEMORIES

THE Malvolio of cities — sick of its own self-conceit!" Thus Barrymore, with Bohemian prejudices, described it in one of those epigrams which spurted from him like sparks from a squib. And Boston keeps its good opinion of itself in facing the world and resents disparagement, conscious as it may be — conscious or sub-conscious as it must be — of the changes which are effacing its old distinction. As in Edinburgh, the authors who gave it fame have gone without replacement. It has lost its ancient peace, its dignity, its seriousness, like nearly all the rest of the world. Its new generation has no better manners and no finer tastes than have other places. A few old people of placid mien and benevolence, high-minded and altruistic, remain, but they are as ghosts, with hardly more of earth about them than the smell of lavender.

Such people seemed to preponderate in the Boston I caught glimpses of in the early seventies, a town unraided by grafters and unpinnacled by skyscrapers. Soothing in its orderliness, its hotels were like the sarcophagi of Egyptian kings, and its business was done in rows of solemn-faced granite buildings two or three stories high; its modest dwellings were gathered within a mile's radius of Beacon Hill, with Commonwealth Avenue just beginning to emerge from the shallows of the Back Bay, to dip its feet like a cautious bather, as

it were, without too much confidence in what it was doing in that direction.

It was rigidly respectable and justified in its high opinions of itself; everybody was polite and intelligent; even the policeman raised his hand and said "Sir" or "Madam" to you when you spoke to him. Its atmosphere was that of an old-world seat of learning, decorous, unprecipitate, calm. Howells has caught it to perfection in the first chapter of "A Woman's Reason." One got the impression of the repose and intellectual self-possession of an Oxford or a Cambridge released from traditional impediments and occupied with the present and future instead of the past; a place full of inquiry and glowing desires and aspirations. The giants held their own, and to the Saturday Club came Lowell, Longfellow, Emerson, Whittier, Holmes and their friends.

Even then Boston was fond of clubs. Robert Grant once said to me, "Whenever a man finds he is having a good time in Boston he forms himself into a club." The Saturday was founded at the same time as the *Atlantic Monthly*, but though some of its members were contributors to that magazine there was no connection between the two. The Saturday, as Doctor Holmes described it to me in a letter, "met at half-past two in the afternoon to accommodate the members who came from Concord, and each paid for his own dinner and that of any friend whom he introduced. Longfellow sat at one end of the table and Agassiz at the other. There were no by-laws or rules, except those governing elections, and there was neither 'speechifying' nor formality of any kind. Few literary men of eminence have ever been allowed to pass through Boston without being entertained by the Saturday Club; and at its table were

to be found, besides those already mentioned, Hawthorne, Motley, and Sumner.

"There was and is nothing of the Bohemian element about it," the "Autocrat" added, "but it has had many good times and not a little good talking. We never had a Bohemia in Boston, and we never wanted it."

But the "Autocrat" was wrong. The Papyrus was in existence even then. A curious unpublished little book lies before me, which was written, I think, by George F. Babbitt. It is called "A Primer of the Papyrus," and it explains that club with much simplicity. There are two classes of members, literary and non-literary, and the question, "What is the difference between them," is answered in the "Primer," as follows: "Well, Sonny, a Literary Member fetches only ten dollars, while a Non-Literary Member fetches twenty-five dollars — unless the Man who proposes your Name is up to Snuff." Then there is a picture of an Egyptian temple, with a sphinx grasping a bottle of champagne, at the portals, and this is accompanied by the following description: "Do you see this Magnificent castle? The front entrance is guarded by Sphinxes and Things and the Reed Immortal is cultivated in the Back Yard. It is the Papyrus Club House, and it is located in the air. The Non-Literary members furnish the Building and the Literary members furnish the Air. The Art Gallery contains the Busts of all the Ex-Presidents of the Club. If you pay your Dues regularly and have the Custody of the Returns, perhaps You can go on a Bust some day Yourself." Article II of the constitution reads as follows: "The object of this club shall be to promote good fellowship and literary and artistic tastes among its members," which is thus annotated in the audacious

"Primer": "See this nice sentence. It is a Choice Extract from the Constitution of the Papyrus Club. Is it not a Beautiful Paragraph? It was built to test the after-dinner Punch with. If the sentence can be shouted with Ease then the Punch is Bad. But if the Sentence cannot be Shouted with Ease then the Punch is Good. Is it not a Great Invention? Let us all go and Shout!"

When I joined the Papyrus, Dr. Frank A. Harris was its president. A physician by profession, his best medicine was his own cheery disposition and unflagging wit. Few could hold their own in fence with Aldrich, but Frank Harris proved himself to be a worthy rival at a luncheon I gave at Ober's one afternoon. Aldrich in his best form was provocative, Harris on the defensive at the beginning, wary and deferential, a little doubtful of his abilities to cope with such an adversary. Boyle O'Reilly was there too, and the altogether charming Nugent Robinson, a visitor from New York, man of letters and man of the world, the dreamer of iridescent Utopias which never solidified, the millionaire of tomorrows which never came. But the rest of us were silent and content to watch and listen and laugh: it was like the sword play of two masters of fence, swift as flashes of light, and it went on without fatigue till the afternoon drew in and the waiters began to set the tables for dinner. It was impossible to say which of the two had the advantage in the end; I think it was a "draw."

One day I went to consult Doctor Harris professionally. I had had a call to New York, and felt unequal to the journey. He listened to my own diagnosis with much patience, and, without offering me the prescription I expected, put on his hat and overcoat to go out.

"Come on," was all he said at the moment.

"Aren't you going to give me something?"

"Yes. Come on."

I thought he was leading me to a chemist's, but instead he took me to the Algonquin Club and seated me at a table.

"Here's the prescription," he said, giving it to the waiter. "Oysters on the half shell, clear turtle soup, a broiled grouse, plenty of celery, an omelette and a pint of very dry wine.'

It worked like a charm, and I took the afternoon train in the best of spirits.

He was one of the "medical examiners," who, to the advantage of everybody, had superseded the old-time coroners, and many were his stories of the absurdities of the struggles which had taken place between those antiquated officials, who were paid by fees whenever their services were required. They had chased one another down the streets, and bandied abuse on the way, in their efforts to be first on the scene of the tragedy and thus able to claim the fees. They had fought over the body itself.

I was absent from Boston for twelve years, and when I returned some of its charm had already gone, through deaths, commercial expansion, and political decadence, but Holmes, Lowell, Parkman, and Aldrich survived.

I had written an article about Doctor Holmes which pleased him, and he paid me the compliment of saying, "It is written as one gentleman should write of another." He gave me the privilege of calling on him at his home on Beacon Street, and in summer I was occasionally invited to his cottage at Beverly Farms —"Poverty Flat," he called it, because, as he said, it was close to Pride's Crossing, the name of the next station to Beverly Farms,

a neighbourhood of many estates much more splendid than his own.

In a letter previous to my first visit he gave me a detailed description of it:

The village of Beverly Farms is remarkable for its great variety of surface, its picturesque rock ledges and bowlders, the beauty and luxuriance of its woods, especially of its pines and oaks, the varied indentations of its shore, and the great number of admirable situations for residences along the shore and on the hills which overlook it.

Driving is the one great luxury of the place. The roads are excellent; they lead to and through interesting villages and open a vast number of fine prospects over the land and the ocean, and, among other frequent objects of admiration, noble old elms in large numbers. There is a good deal of riding as well as driving, and there are ladies among us who follow the beagles as bravely as those who sit astride their horses' backs.

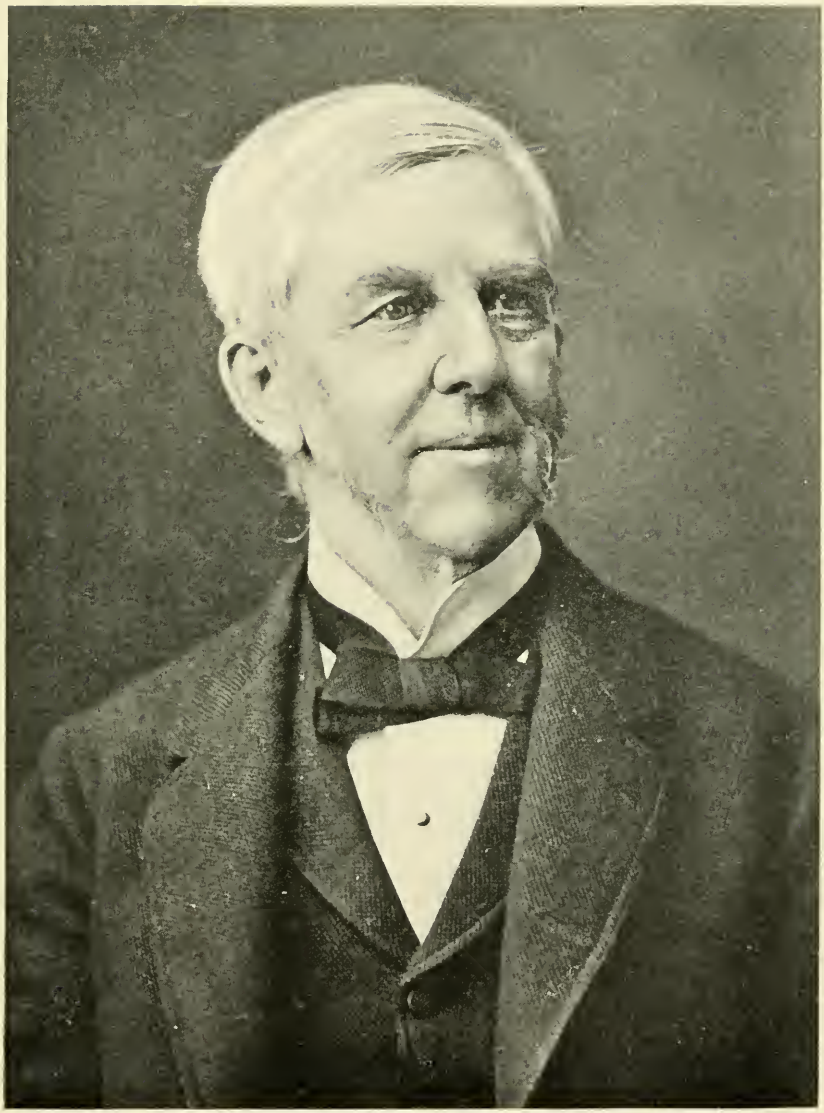
There is an infinite number of pleasant walks, but I do not think there is a great deal of walking. I have never asked the shoemakers, but I doubt if sole leather suffers a great deal with us during the summer. I walk somewhat myself — pretty regularly, indeed — but I meet few people moving on their own feet.

How other persons amuse themselves here I can hardly tell you. I think there is a little gayety among the younger fashionable people, but the atmosphere is not that of Newport or Lenox.

The "meet" for the hunt is the least solemn diversion on which I have looked during my ten or a dozen summers here. A solitary bather splashes in the sea now and then, and I have even seen two or three in a state of considerable hilarity, but the water is cold and the air is cool, and the temptation to disport in the chilling waves is not overwhelming. Still, young persons like it, and a few years ago I liked it well enough myself.

The wind at Beverly Farms blows over the water a great part of the time, and is deliciously refreshing to those who come from the hot city. Delicate persons will be apt to find the climate too cold, and some may be better off on any of our southern shores; but to those of the right temperament nothing can be better than our cool, bracing air.

In short, it is a healthy, quiet, charming summer residence, and deserves all its reputation as one of the loveliest spots on the New England coast. But going there, as going to any country place, you must pack the spirit of contentment and a desire for tranquil restfulness with your clothes and dressing case, or you will not find the happiness you are after.



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

He was one of the most accessible of men, though one might infer from his books that he was intolerant of all visitors except his closest friends. Seated in an easy chair, facing the Charles River and Cambridge, a view which recalled life-long associations, he would chat through the better part of an afternoon and gently persuade one to stay when one's conscience pricked one with the fear of outwearing a welcome. "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto* — I am a man, and nothing that concerns a man is a matter of indifference to me," he used to chirp, and then launch out into discourses as various and as suggestive as the chapters of "The Autocrat." In part they were serious, but they usually ended with a smile in some unexpected turn of wit or fresh colloquialism. He brought Minerva down from her pedestal, and, yielding to his mood, she danced for him; indeed, I suspect that they winked at each other. Psychology, which was then less in the air and less a by-word of the street than it is now, often came up in his conversation, and if he did not believe in telepathy, he had incidents within his own experience to quote which inclined him to respect its possibilities.

"Only yesterday, he said, "I happened to think of a man I had not seen for twenty years or more. It was here in this very room. A little later I went downstairs, and there, on the hall stand, was a letter from him. A coincidence? I think it was more than that."

Another time he spoke of immortality. He was curled up in his cushioned chair, with his forehead reposing in his palm, and his eyes gazing across the river — which was reddening in the late afternoon — toward Cambridge, where part of his early life had passed.

In a pause my memory reverted to an incident in his

boyhood. On his way to school, he, small, delicate, and fanciful, had to pass under a glove-maker's sign — a great wooden hand — which used to swing and creak and fill him with terror. "Oh, the dreadful hand," he wrote, "always hanging there ready to catch up a little boy, who would come home to supper no more, nor get to bed — whose porringer would be laid away empty thenceforth, and his half-worn shoes wait until his smaller brothers grew to fit them."

Oh, the dreadful hand, I thought as I looked at him.

"I often think of death, often, as I sit here, but I have no fear of it. No," repeating the word and shaking his head emphatically, "I have no fear of it." Then he relaxed and smiled. "What do you suppose happened the other day?"

He told me that Mr. McClure had called to persuade him to give his views of immortality in a novel form. He was to converse on the subject with a lady author — Elizabeth Stuart Phelps — and an amanuensis was to record what they said. "I wouldn't listen to it. I told him that I would neither be allured nor McClured into such a project. Why, it would be like an analysis of my spinal marrow. They are always offering me jobs, perhaps because of the facility with which I have turned out occasional verses. I have done far too much nonsense of that kind. Yes, that's it," he said, when I reminded him of his own verses:

"Here's the cousin of a king;
Would I do the civil thing?
Here's the first-born of a queen;
Here's a slant-eyed mandarin.
Would I polish off Japan?
Would I greet this famous man?

Prince or prelate, sheik or Shah?
Figaro ci and Figaro la!
Would I just this once comply?—
So they teased and teased till I
(Be the truth at once confessed)
Wavered — yielded — did my best."

"When I think of Gladstone and James Freeman Clarke, both born the same year that I was, I feel futile and almost ashamed of myself," he added. "But I like to hear any pleasant things that are said about me. Here is a letter from a girl who says she sleeps with my poems under her pillow. I wonder if she does — but it's delightful to hear it. I like to be flattered; it is one of the sweetest things in the world to me."

He spoke with the innocence and simplicity of a child.

He was in the eighties then, and was proud of his old age and greatly interested in old men and facts relating to longevity. He admired Mr. Gladstone, and when after a visit to Hawarden I delivered a message from the great statesman to him, he closely questioned me regarding the extent to which Mr. Gladstone was resisting the ravages of time.

"Well, I don't often take stock," he said with a twinkle, "but the other day I happened to pick up this (a hand-glass) and look into that (a mirror), and I myself was surprised to find a ring of hair on the back of my neck that hasn't turned at all yet. But I feel that it's time to take in sail. Look at my contemporaries — they're all in dock — yes, and some of them pretty deep in the mud, too."

That was a year before he died.

With all his geniality, he was a Brahmin; with all his love of humanity, he was an aristocrat. His conscious-

ness of class and caste was undisguised and quite apparent, and yet he was essentially a Yankee, autochthonous to New England and nowhere else.

Sometimes I saw Whittier at Danvers in the pleasant house called Oak Knoll in which he spent his declining years, a saintly old man who then had almost ceased to write. Writing, he told me, had never been easy to him, even in his prime. "Now I never pick up a pen that it does not give me a headache," he said. In summer you found him oftener in his garden than any other place, plying his hoe or rake among the flowers, watching the antics of the squirrels, or listening to the birds in the overhanging foliage. He was still a student in that "unhoused lyceum," as he called it, where he learned his first lesson in song. He also told me that "Snow Bound" is in a great measure autobiographical, that it describes what his home life was till he reached his nineteenth year. The various characters described in that poem are portraits, and the house is the house in which he was born. It still stands in Haverhill, and was in possession of the family for more than two centuries; but the long line of ancestors never made a fortune, and all they ever succeeded in leaving their descendants was a good name and a deeply implanted morality of character, moulded according to the Quaker faith in which all of them were nourished.

I became a neighbour of Francis Parkman, the historian, at Jamaica Plain. "Make her plain," the trainhands pronounced it, and a roguish friend of mine, hearing it, used to whisper after a glance at some of the feminine passengers, "Can't make 'em any plainer; no, sir, it can't be done." Parkman was a tall, lean, shy man, long-faced and melancholy, who for many years had suf-

fered from insomnia and alarmed his friends by the huge doses of sulphonal he confessed to. I never knew any one kinder or more sympathetic. He had a wonderful garden on the edge of Jamaica Pond, and there he cultivated his roses more successfully than sleep.

Howells had gone, but almost any day you could meet Aldrich, "a middle-aged young man," as he then called himself, coming around "Brimstone Corner." You might think that, as he was on his way to the *Atlantic's* office, it would be improper to detain him, but very likely he would press you, if you were a friend, to come in with him and smoke. A winding stairway led into an isolated box no bigger than a ship's stateroom. There were two or three prints and drawings in black and white on the walls, and little furniture besides a couple of chairs, an old brass-handled desk, and a chest of drawers stuffed full of manuscripts. The windows looked out on the rear of the houses in Beacon Street, and on the old Granary Burying Ground, across the gray memorials of which and through a screen of foliage we could see Tremont Street with its procession of jingling horse-cars. And there he would grow confidential, leaning back in his chair, smoking a meerschaum pipe, and twirling a fragile gold chain attached to his eyeglasses, a familiar habit of his. Somehow one always met him with a smile and left him with a laugh. He bubbled like an effervescent wine.

Although for some years we met day after day I had many letters from him, and few that came to an end without some gleam of his touch-and-go humour. He writes to me from his cottage at Lynn Terrace — his "sea-shell," as he called it — and says: "I am guiltily employed here in writing a short story for the editor of the *Atlantic*, if he will accept it," the editor at that time being

himself. Then he complains that he is getting "fat and scant of breath — almost as fat as Howells." He liked to believe himself to be overwhelmed with work, though I never knew a more leisurely man. "I am up to my eyes in lyrics and poems and short stories. Look out for them (in order to avoid them) by and by." Then he praises a little story of mine: "If you had remained in England, you would never have learned to write such good English," and another note begins with a quotation from Caxton, printed in a fac-simile of the old English black letters: "After dyverse Werkes, made, translated, and achieved, having noo werke in hande I sitte in my studye, where laye many dyverse paunflettes and Bookys."

His study was at the top of his Mount Vernon Street house, and he liked to play the recluse in that sanctum. Nothing was ever to be disturbed there; nothing out of order restored to its proper place. The feminine hand of control visible elsewhere was not allowed to raise itself within that retreat of scholarly abstraction. Things might tumble from the table; they were not to be picked up till wanted, and then only by the recluse himself. The ink might spill; the blot on the table was not wiped off, and in the same way an accident to the mucilage was not followed by the application of any restorative towel. Of course, he worked there seriously enough, but he had to have a little joke with himself. He chose to be as fancy free as he was when a boy in the attic of his old Portsmouth home, where, finding a half-used bottle of hair restorer one day, he diligently applied the contents to one of those old-fashioned, unscraped, cowhide trunks and waited patiently to see the brown and white bristles on it lengthen.

I quote two of his letters to me — the first I ever re-

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beneficiary was delighted when the appointment turned out three times as good as that looked for — nothing less, indeed, than one of Great Britain's chief seaports. I think that the emoluments from it were almost, if not quite, equal to his own income, and I remember how he laughed when he told me of it, not enviously, but with a relish of what was ironical, rather than humorous, in his achievement.

He had abounding humour; his smile invited you to see the amusing side of what you were doing or relating, when perhaps you, absorbed in it, had not awakened to the latent possibilities of a mirthful turn. He smiled oftener than he laughed, and when he laughed what you heard was a rich, musical chuckle like the low buzz of a 'cello. Yet he may be said to have been a serious man, fervid and quick to feel, with an underlying strain of melancholy in him that came to the surface in the dark, deep-set, expressive eyes which proclaimed his ideality. Physically, he was supple, spare, and symmetrical, an athlete in aspect and in action, with well-balanced features and a brilliant complexion, its clearness and glow emphasized by raven-like hair.

A monument to him stands in a corner of the Boston Fenway, a sufficiently dignified work of art; but I should prefer to see him commemorated in a full-length portrait statue in such a characteristic attitude as we grew familiar with at the Papyrus Club when he was reading his verses; his figure at its full height; his head poised like that of a listening eagle; the manuscript projected in his right hand, while the fingers of the left were hooked in his trousers pocket — the whole expression that of inspiration and exaltation.

Henry Bernard Carpenter, another Irishman, is not

to be forgotten. He came to Boston from Liverpool for reasons best known to himself, and though he was the brother of the Lord Bishop of Ripon, and had been intended for the Church of England, he joined the Unitarians and preached to delighted congregations in the building which is now the Hollis Street Theatre. His eloquence was overwhelming. Listening to him in his rhetorical flights, one had the sensation of being smothered by the odorous and prismatic downpour of roses. Doctrine and dogma received little attention. The spirit mounted and beckoned in ecstatic accents, which it was almost exhausting to follow, and you came away breathless, entranced, and perhaps a little bewildered.

He who had thus moved you was one of the simplest and most human of men, a poet as well as a preacher, a lover of his kind, who reconciled the kingdom of the world with the kingdom of God. He seldom missed the relaxations of the Papyrus, and on Sunday nights gathered his intimates about him for suppers in his rooms in the Hotel Glendon. As fair as O'Reilly was dark, he was nevertheless a type of his race. He spoke with a mellifluous touch of the brogue, quickly, trippingly, with spontaneous humor and wit, and was restless in his solicitude for your comfort and happiness, whoever you might be.

His standards were generous. "There," he said to me one day when we were standing on a Boylston Street corner and a friend was seen approaching, "there's the perfect man — a man with all the virtues and all the vices of his kind. That is what I call the perfect man." A not exacting appraisement, but one practically and eminently characteristic of Carpenter.

Who remembers dear old George Snell, the club's

Englishman, Boston's Englishman, the Englishman as he is popularly prefigured everywhere — kind, slow, ponderous, who would make speeches and never was able to extricate himself from the web he wove for himself at the outset?

Snell was the architect of the old Music Hall, where I first heard Wendell Phillips and Emerson — Emerson with that fixed, undaunted, seraphic smile, which was never brighter than when he spilt his manuscripts over the stage and took five or ten minutes leisurely to pick up the scattered leaves, beaming all the while on the audience as though it could not be possible for them to miss seeing what an exquisite joke all this was! The old Music Hall, where Anna Dickinson flamed, with real tears in her eyes, against the subjugation of her sex; where Henry Ward Beecher shook his long mane and poured out his strange mixture of eloquence and familiar jocularity; where all the stars of the golden age of the lecture bureau in its prime flashed in turn, with intermissions of oratorios and ballads; where I heard Christine Nilsson, fair as a flower, radiant as a star, sing her first song in America! What memories of profitable and improving evenings of Victorian propriety and New England inexpensiveness the old Music Hall, that temple of chaste delights and continent intellectuality, brings up!

But I must come back to Snell, to tell a story of him. He lived in the Studio Building, environed by the accumulations of a discreet taste and ample means; he was sufficient to himself beyond other detached men in that he was a gastronomer who had not only a palate and an appreciation, but the gift of gratifying both through his own skill in the kitchen. A cook was superfluous to

him; I believe he was prouder of his epicurean talent than of his architecture.

One evening he met Bernard Carpenter and me on our return from a country wedding, and insisted that we should dine with him in his studio, which we were all the readier to do since we had missed our luncheon, and, after trifling with salads and strawberries, were very hungry. His little dining-room would have provoked an appetite had we not brought it with us. Where pictures did not hang against the walls and doors, shelves and cupboards glittered with silver and Sheffield plate, flagons, decanters, goblets, and smaller glasses of prismatic Venetian and Bohemian elegance. Out of one window he had built a refrigerator, and behold, within it, a dressed brace of birds, celery, oysters, cutlets! Out of another window, a compact and ingenious range, heated by gas, which seemed more than equal to anything that could be reasonably expected from it. Every nook had been utilized, and what was not of utility in a narrow sense compelled attention by its beauty.

What a dinner we anticipated here! And how we praised the taste, the comfort and the ingenuity of the equipment! But our appetites were gnawing and clamouring for "demonstrations" while Snell stuck to theory and made no progress — not even a start — toward relieving our famine.

Eight o'clock struck on the clock at "Brimstone Corner," and, like Jack Tanner in "Man and Superman," he was "still talking." Carpenter's appreciation, which had been rhetorical, drooped now, and he turned to me with the despair of a castaway who finds himself alone on a foodless island. Nine o'clock! and like the farmer with his claret, we were "getting no forrarder."

Somewhere between that and ten o'clock our spirits surged. Still talking heavily to us from the distance, Snell lighted the range and went into another room, and we heard him moving about there for half an hour — doing what? We were wondering and hoping when he reappeared in the full uniform of a cook — jacket, apron, and flat cap, all of spotless white, the table-cloth across his arm. We stared at him like condemned men who hear that there is no reprieve, for he sat down and renewed his monologue! It was to himself now; we could not speak. In a moment he dozed. "Quick!" whispered Carpenter, tragically. "To the club! Quick!"

We explained elaborately and apologized profusely when we again met him, and he forgave us for the affront we had put upon his hospitality.

"You missed it, though," he said. "Those birds were delicious."

"When did you eat them?"

"Ah — er — er — let me see. No; not that night. Er — er — the next day."

But we — Carpenter and I — had experienced starvation as poignantly as Jack London ever described it, for it was past eleven o'clock before we found relief at the club.

Another friend of those days, also a Papyrian, was Julius Eichberg, the musician, father of the brilliant lady who is now the wife of John Lane, the publisher. Eichberg was the last survivor of Mendelssohn's orchestra, a picturesque, pallid, and stately man, with a massive, leonine head and a mane of wavy, silvery hair that fell from it like a storm-tossed cascade. Though a German, he spoke English almost like a native, and wrote it even better, with idiomatic raciness. His unpublished reminiscences of Mendelssohn and others, now

I believe, in Mrs. Lane's possession, should some day find a welcome in a book. Serious in manner and sonorous in voice, he was apt in graphic phrases. When he met me on my return from my wedding journey he startled me by a question, asked in the deep, solemn, reverberating tones of an inquisitor: "Well, sir, what is it? a sacrament or a superstition?"

Playful as he was, an unassailable dignity and self-possession shielded him from too much familiarity, even in those who were his intimates.

One night we were dining at the St. Botolph Club, and when pork chops were served as one of the courses Eichberg helped himself to them freely. A well-known painter who sat next to him, more injudicious than unkind, exclaimed jokingly, "Here, Eichberg, you musn't eat those. You can't be a Jew if you do."

Eichberg turned on him in the haughtiest manner, speaking as from a height and from his soul with inflexible pride: "But I am a Jew." The words had an Olympian menace and defiance in them.

A painful silence followed, and, seeing his mistake, the blunderer stammered, "I didn't mean anything. Why, I have Jewish blood in my own veins."

Eichberg faced him, tossed his mane, shrugging his shoulders as he did so, restrained but not pacified. He breathed from a depth that heaved his body as he cast the extenuation aside. He spoke with a reverberating inflexion, like a pontiff about to excommunicate. A pause offered no possibility of reprieve.

"You — have — Jewish blood — in your veins? So! But even that does not gonzole me."

And ending, with a sigh of unutterable significance, he froze again.

XI

HENRY M. STANLEY AND PAUL DU CHAILLU

IMAGINATION is precipitate, and those who have it know how often it misleads them. It is light-winged and audacious, and cannot hear of any interesting person without at once prefiguring him in a fanciful portrait which is more than likely to be wrong and confusing in every particular. The reading of his books or even his letters serves not in revealing his appearance to us, but from a thin soil of evidence those of us who are blessed or afflicted with the visionary and anticipatory habit draw, to use a phrase of Henry James in relation to Taine, luxuriant flowers of deduction.

Henry M. Stanley is an instance of what I have in mind. I had talked with men who had been with him on his African expeditions, and the impression I gathered from them was that, though he was not inhuman, he spared neither man nor beast when in desperate straits. He would not defer to the counsel or the pleas of others, or have any patience with less than instant and unquestioning obedience to his orders under all circumstances. Nor would he forbear under arguments or excuses, or relax his severity by any familiarity or pleasantries, even when his object had been gained. He was both despot and martinet; exacting, silent, and inscrutable.

"I cannot say we loved him," one of his lieutenants

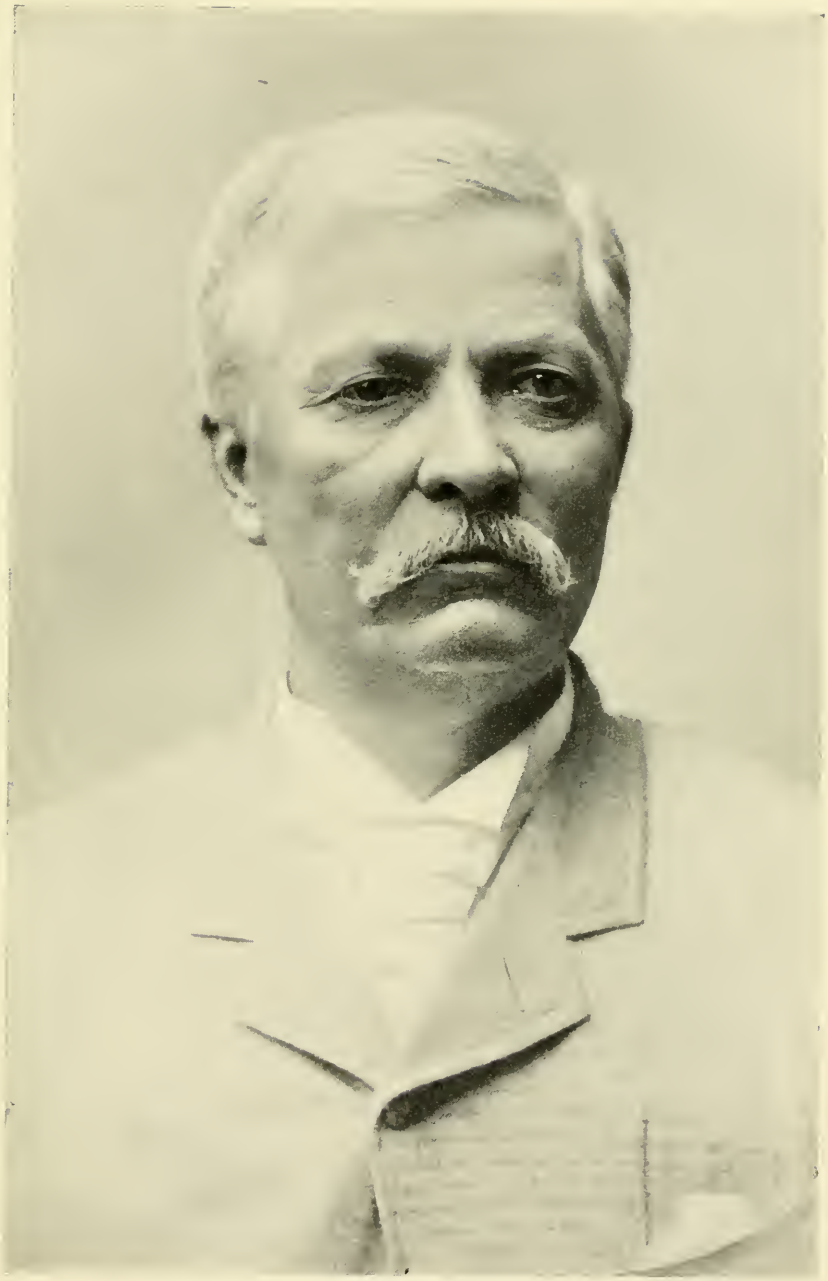
said to me; "we were all afraid of him: but we all believed in him."

What details to inspire an imaginary portrait of him! The silent man in white, imperturbable in the heart of the African forest, his words restricted to commands, which his followers, recognizing their destiny in him, leaped to obey!

I had not met him in my old newspaper days, when he was a reporter on the New York *Herald*, but after his return to America from his successful search for Livingstone, he came to one of the monthly dinners of the Papyrus Club in Boston, that Bohemian gathering of "literary" and "non-literary" members described by Howells in "A Modern Instance." Prominent in it in those golden days were John Boyle O'Reilly, Charles Eyre Pascoe, Robert Grant, John D. Wheelwright, Alexander Young, Frank Underwood (founder of the *Atlantic*), George F. Babbitt, and Frank A. Harris, dramatist and physician.

A list of the guests would include not only the vanished generation of Boston's Augustan age, in which Motley, Holmes, Emerson, Parkman, and Lowell were preëminent, but also almost every celebrity who ever came to that city.

None of them was received with excessive deference; nor did their presence, however exalted they might be, restrain the customary chaff and exuberance that noisily sped the dinner. I think that when it was announced that Stanley had accepted an invitation, it caused more awe than had ever been seen in the club before, and that others visualized him as I had done in my mind's eye — superhuman rather than human, for whom one's admiration was necessarily qualified by a degree of fear.



Photograph by Morris, N. Z. Courtesy of the S. S. McClure Co.

HENRY M. STANLEY

Then he appeared, closely-knit, broad-shouldered and below, rather than above, medium height, with a face whose natural pallor had been overlaid by exposure, and whose expression was more of intellectual problems than of the physical problems the solution of which had made him famous.

Probably those who came to entertain him never had a more difficult task. Unusual compliments were paid, and questions asked, apparently without moving him to pleasure or interest. Whether he sat or stood, he fidgeted and answered in monosyllables, not because he was unamiable or unappreciative, but because he — this man of iron, God s instrument, whose word in the field brooked no contradiction or evasion, he who defied obstacles and danger and pierced the heart of darkness — was *bashful* even in the company of fellow craftsmen!

His embarrassment grew when, after dinner, the chairman eulogized him to the audience; he squirmed and averted his face as cheer after cheer confirmed the speaker's rhetorical ebullience of praise. "Gentlemen, I introduce to you Mr. Stanley, who," etc. The hero stood up slowly, painfully, reluctantly, and, with a gesture of deprecation, fumbled in first one and then another of his pockets without finding what he sought.

It was supposed that he was looking for his notes, and more applause took the edge off the delay. His mouth twitched without speech for another awkward minute before, with a more erect bearing, he produced the object of his search and put it on his head. It was not paper, but a rag of a cap; and, with that on, he faced the company as one who by the act had done all that could be expected of him, and made further acknowledgment of the honours he had received superfluous. It was a cap

Livingstone had worn, and Livingstone had given him. The others left their seats and crowded about him for an explanation — not all knew the meaning of it — and after a dry, stammered word or two, he sank with a sigh of relief from a terrifying predicament into his chair.

Years afterward I occasionally met him in London at his house in Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, at parties, and at the House of Commons. He had finished his work in Africa meanwhile, and, with reason to be satisfied with what he had done in opening that continent to civilization, he had settled down with a beautiful, accomplished, and adoring wife. She would have made a society man of him, but he never looked happy at social functions. The only complaint she made against him was that he would stand aside instead of asserting himself in a crowd. Whenever there was a rush for seats in a train, all the better accommodation would be taken before he made any effort to provide for her or himself, and so elsewhere. He would allow himself to be trodden on without remonstrance; never was there so patient a lion. So, when he entered the House of Commons, he was never as conspicuous as he should have been, on his merits.

"There are only one or two subjects on which I should care to speak," he said to me one afternoon at "tea on the Terrace." "For instance, when African questions have come up, I have thought my knowledge of that country sufficient to be of service; but, somehow or other, another fellow is always on his feet before me, and though he may never have been in Africa, the Speaker gives him the floor.

That was the only time I ever heard him bewail his ineffectiveness in Parliament, the only murmur of discontent. Knighthood, the freedom of great cities, and

the highest degrees of the universities and learned societies had been conferred on him. His table and sideboard were loaded with caskets of silver and gold holding tributes to his achievements, which his wife loved to display. She herself, a woman of wit and beauty, was the painter and exhibitor in the Royal Academy of the best portrait of him. But he often seemed as distraught in London as he had been at the Papyrus so many years before.

Such was the impression I received of him. I quote, however, a letter of Lady Stanley's which portrays him from her more intimate point of view:

DEAR MR. RIDEING:

You have certainly hit the mark, when you describe Stanley as very shy; but in any public assemblage where he had to speak, he quickly overcame that feeling of bashfulness and spoke with easy power. I think your memory played you a trick, when you say that one of his officers told you that they feared Stanley more than they loved him.* I think perhaps they did both, but love was deep and lasting. Stanley, however, was not the stern, relentless, sombre man, without fun or humour, so often imagined. He was *bubbling* over with fun and boyish spirits, when the occasion allowed it, though of course in Africa he probably had to repress himself.

Stanley never read his Bible in the presence of his officers, and he never spoke of his religious convictions; indeed, he was extremely reticent on this subject. In a crowded assemblage his one idea was to get away, but to see him at Furze Hill, with his friends, you would have found him full of spirits.

What a contrast between Stanley and Paul du Chaillu! "I, Paul, ' as Du Chaillu usually spoke of himself. He reminded me of the old story of the Marseillaise and the Gascon. "I," said the former, "love art — music, painting, poetry." The latter declared, "I love sport, always sport, nothing but sport." He then described his recent experiences in Africa.

"Ten lions in twenty minutes — not a bad record,

*No, Lady Stanley is wrong there.

eh? After breakfast I went out again. Lighted a cigarette. Heard a noise in the bushes to the left. Another lion. Bang! Killed him! Went a little farther, took a sip from my flask. Noise in the bushes to the right. Another lion. Bang! Killed him! Had a nap and a sandwich. Getting tired of it. This time a sound in the bushes right ahead. The biggest lion you ever saw — thirty feet from his muzzle to the tip of his tail, every inch of it. Levelled my gun and aimed."

The Marseillaise could stand it no longer. "See here, if you kill that lion, I'll kill you."

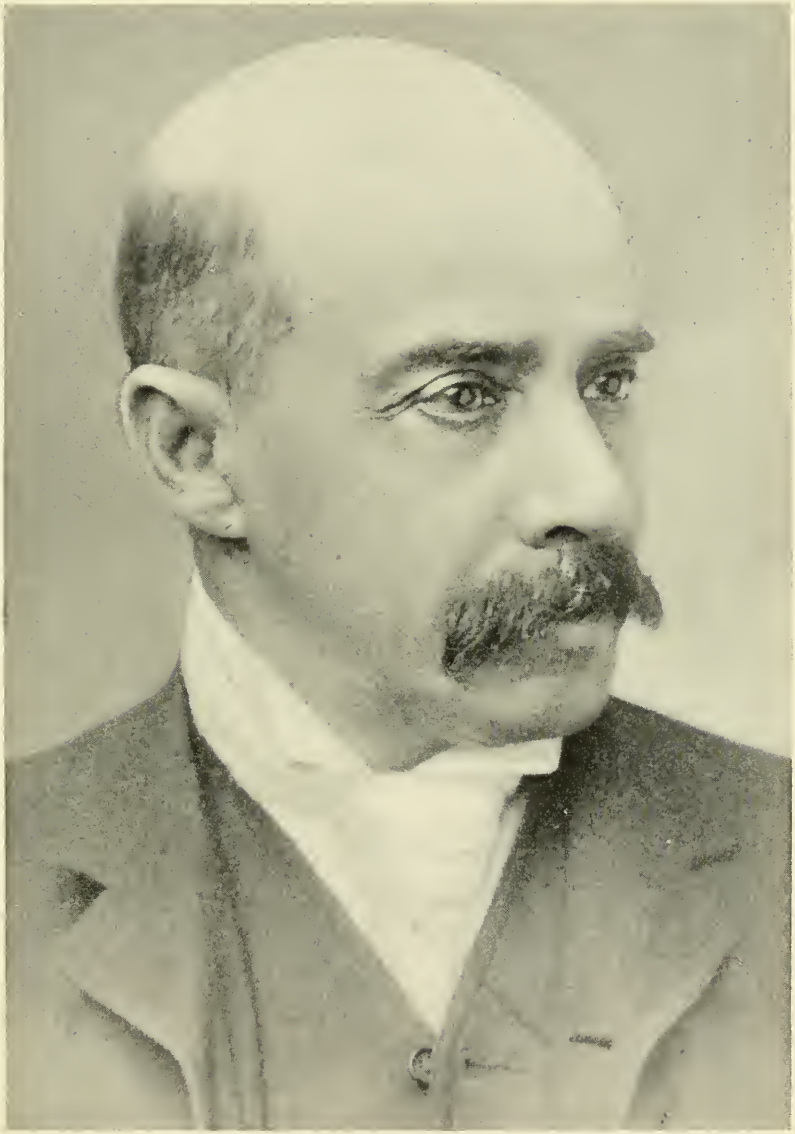
The warning was promptly taken. "Bang! Missed him!"

Du Chaillu claimed too many lions, and listening to him one had the not unpleasant feeling of reverting to childhood and sitting in the lap of the amazing Münchausen. He was dark, small, volatile, and voluble, and no matter how a conversation with him drifted, it was almost sure to end in the tropical bush, among gorillas and beasts of prey. With fierce gesticulations and a flashing eye, he pictured the scene dramatically. "Bang! Another lion!" or a mammoth ape, excelling in temper and strength all the monstrous prodigies that had already been introduced to us.

I remember his account of his first lecture in Boston.

"Bah! I had ten gorillas behind me on the platform, stuffed, and about twenty in the audience before me, unstuffed. I, Paul — I — I — I!"

His habit of rodomontade discredited him. He was like a braggart boy who has done something and so obviously exaggerates it that he is deprived of even the lesser glory his actual feats should earn for him. He might have desired to refrain from romancing and em-



Courtesy of the S. S. McClure Co.

PAUL DU CHAILLU

bellishing, but his imagination rode him like a highwayman and spurred him into many flights through the moonshine of illusion. When his work was winnowed, the bulk of it preserved substantial values to science and geography. What had to be cast aside could be attributed, not to intentional imposture, but to that rough rider of temperamental exuberance that risks its neck without other motive or goal than the diversion of spectators. So many admirable qualities had he — he was so genial, so vivacious, and so witty —that I disquiet my conscience in mentioning his foibles at all, and question whether the consciousness of what I have said may not aggravate rather than extenuate the unkindness of it.

XII

A ROYAL ACADEMICIAN AND HIS FRIENDS

SINCE 1878 it has been my custom to make frequent trips to Europe and to England, and one of my first friends in London was George H. Boughton, the Royal Academician, whose success never spoiled him, and who remained unaffected, unpretentious, and accessible under all circumstances to those for whom he cared, even when they had dropped far behind him in achievement and distinction. I dare say that many of us have heard complaints that success is estranging, that it has little time to spare for those it outpaces, though it protests that its heart is unchanged and unalterable. It pretends to bewail the days that are gone, and wishes them back: it "dear old fellows" you, and will drop in on you some day soon at your "diggings," and when you murmur congratulations it smirks and says "nonsense," and that there are no such times as the old times. Then — "Ta-ta, old chap!" — and off it goes in its shining Victoria or landau, breathing a sigh of relief at the escape from further detention, and forgetting you in a flash until years hence some mischance perhaps restores you to that fickle memory. Success, we are told, likes the company of its peers in its own seventh heaven, and has its own proper apology for its choice, and it is only when it stoops to humbug that it repels.

There was nothing of that sort about Boughton. He

clung to old comrades, and all he asked of them was that they should be interesting. "All that is necessary to success, socially, in London," he said axiomatically, "is that you shall be interesting." And for newer and younger acquaintances, if they prepossessed him, and had talent meriting recognition, there could not have been a more useful or a more willing service than that which he gave voluntarily in putting them on their feet.

He knew everybody in literature and in art, and everybody liked him. "I have been sitting between Browning and Leighton, and Boughton put me there. You may think I am dreaming. I thought I was. I had to pinch myself to make sure. But it's a fact," wrote a young American artist to me soon after his arrival in England with a letter of introduction to Boughton at his beautiful house on Campden Hill, Kensington. A simple missive of that kind to him usually opened not only his own door, but also the doors of the eminent people in his circle. Things like that one had to discover for one's self, but he was not reticent about the kindnesses done for him by others.

My own letter of introduction to him, presented in 1878, at once led to hospitalities as little expected as they were deserved, and they were continued to the end of my long friendship with him. Sprightly in figure and infectiously genial and informal, he said that after luncheon he would be disengaged and ready to go out with me. What would I like to do? Kensington was then unfamiliar to me, and I was a worshipper of Thackeray. I suggested a stroll to some of Thackeray's haunts in that suburb where he lived so long and where so much of his greatest work was written. Thackeray himself could have recognized the neighbourhood then; now he

would be estranged in it, if not lost. So we spent all the afternoon in company with Thackeray's ghost and the ghosts of his characters, and saw him sauntering up High Street, a commanding figure in loosely-fitting clothes, abstracted till the voice or the touch of a friend arrested him and turned him into smiles. Miss Thackeray (Lady Ritchie) was out of town: she was then living in a small house on Young Street — "dear old street," she calls it — opposite her old home, No. 13 in her girlhood, No. 16 now, which ought to be the most celebrated house of all London, for there "Vanity Fair," "Esmond" and "Pendennis" were written, in a second-story room overlooking gardens and orchards in the rear. A later tenant was afraid that a tablet in front would attract too much attention, but one had been inserted in the rear wall, and Thackeray himself would hardly have thought it superfluous. When he took James T. Fields, the Boston publisher, to the front door of that domicile he said with mock gravity, "Down on your knees, you rogue, for here 'Vanity Fair' was penned, and I will go down with you, for I have a high opinion of that little production myself!"

Kensington Square is round the corner from Young Street, commercialized and decayed now, but then select and secluded and haunted by the figures of Esmond, Lady Castlewood, and Beatrice.

What an afternoon all this made for me, and we ended it at the Arts Club, in Hanover Square, where Whistler also was dining — an unmistakable poseur, long-limbed and nonchalant, with a drawl as sesquipedalian as that of Mark Twain.

The incident happened long afterward, but I believe it is new to print. Whistler called on another friend of mine,

Albert T. Sterner, the artist, at his studio in Paris, and while they were talking Sterner's little son brought out some of his own sketches and endeavoured to induce the famous visitor to look at them.

"Yes-yes-yes." Whistler put the boy aside.

"Do you know, Sterner, I'm wet. I think I ought to have some hot toddy."

It was or had been raining. The boy disappeared for a minute, and came back with one of his sketches in a frame. Whistler instantly received it from him, and roared, "Haw, haw! The boy's a genius. Haw, haw! He knows the value of a frame!"

Boughton was especially fond of Lord Leighton, and Sir John Millais and had an almost boundless appreciation of them as artists and as men. Full of gratitude, he never wearied of praising Millais's service to him, and as an example he told how, when he was worried about the portrait of a little girl he was painting and repainting without getting the effect he strove for, Millais called, and, learning of his distress, scrutinized the picture.

"Hum!," said Millais, "I know that girl; it's her mouth you've got wrong: give me a bit of pencil. This is the way her mouth goes," and as he said the words, he drew on a piece of paper the correct lines. "That's the only thing wrong with it. Put that right, and you won't have any more trouble with it."

Millais, said Boughton, was exactly like a doctor in his manner, and most soothing. The great thing about him which always impressed you was his clean mind and his sense of healthfulness. He was always like a healthy English squire who had lived all his life out of doors.

For some twenty years, while he was president of the Royal Academy, Leighton gave a series of dinners to all the members, in batches of twenty or so, arranged according to seniority, going thus through the forty members and the thirty associates; and to these would always be added a good admixture of those coming men who were as yet not within the restricted circle of the Royal Academy. Many a young aspirant saw a strong hint in one (and often many) of those coveted invitations of what was in the "lap of the Fates" for him, and in the very near future, probably.

The dinners were always merry ones, for Leighton was a lover of a good jest or story, and his splendid laugh was as musical as his nature After the artistic dinner would come the coffee in the Persian court, beside the patter of the marble fountain. And afterward the guests would troop up the wide, picture-lined staircase to the vast, overflowing study, with the artist's work on show — complete and incomplete pictures, and all the most elaborate sketches and studies for every part of the work done or in hand. Besides these studies on canvas and paper would be some others in wax or clay, not only for his sculptures and bronzes, but for groups in his large and important pictures as well. Many of these little figurines would suggest by their classic grace those from Tanagra.

"Now, boys" — Leighton generally called his associates "boys" — "suggestions, criticisms, praises, and condemnations are earnestly invited and gratefully received," and there was no let or hindrance to any sound or sincere expression of any one's feelings as to the works before them.

He had one of the great, open minds that would take advice as freely as it was offered, Boughton told me.

"I mind me of a rather typical instance of this which tells against myself a bit. It was the year that he exhibited his 'Rescue of Andromeda.' On the line and next neighbour to it I found, on the members' varnishing and 'touching-up days,' a picture of my own, I forget which one. Leighton was up on a staging, working for some hours in perfect silence, which I did not seek to interrupt. After a time he descended from his altitude, and taking me back a few steps by a willing arm, demanded a searching criticism.

"'If you see anything to suggest, now is the time, my boy, to out with it, or else forever after hold thy peace.'

"'Well, I do see one small but important matter that I will mention, as you invite remarks.'

"'Good! And that is ——'

"'Well, it's the insufficient-looking little "bolt from the blue" that seems to cause such agony to the stricken monster of the deep.'

"'Not devilish enough?'

"'Not much more fatal than a big paint-brush handle.'

"Leighton laughed, and asked, 'Have you any idea of what such a "bolt," or shaft, or arrow, should be?'

"'Not at this very moment,' I urged, 'but ——'

"At that he handed me his splendid palette and brushes and said, 'Now, my son, look out for my return in half an hour, and during that time you have *carte blanche* to create some lethal weapon that would be likely to annoy, if not to slay, the monster — no fireworks, you know!'

"I mounted the president's scaffold, his palette and brushes in hand and tried hard to conjure up some deadly and worthy arrow of destruction. I need not say that this honour thrust upon me was soon observed by some

of the older members, and taken to be some weird joke of mine.

"Come down from there! Send for Leighton at once, somebody!'

"They must have thought me suddenly gone mad, as I only said, 'Go away! I have leave to finish this splendid work.'

"They wanted to throw me out, and might have done so but for the return of Leighton, who calmed their fears by assuring them that it was all right. I was evolving a heaven-sent arrow to stagger the monster. The laugh on me came when I was obliged to own that I had done nothing to the picture except to stare idly at it. Then their fears were appeased and they departed."

I never knew two men more alike than were Boughton and George du Maurier. I do not refer to their personal appearance — in that they differed — but to their simplicity of character and their detestation of vanity and pretence. Both of them were unobtrusive and inconspicuous and completely free from ostentation in dress and manner. Both viewed life comprehensively and with humorous leniency, and both irradiated a sympathetic warmth which at once unsealed confidences and penetrated the barriers of one's reserves. Intelligence awoke and tingled, and one's humanity glowed in conversation with them, though their speech was that of the least pedantic and least formal of men, and not above a flip of slang when slang could trap an elusive meaning. A word sums them up — they were both natural to the core, and that is a much rarer quality than it appears to be at the moment, or until we search for instances of it in an apish and subservient age, which opposes and

discredits and maligns truth and simplicity as it approves and encourages artificiality and convention.

Like Du Maurier, Boughton had a very fine and discriminating appreciation of literature. He had about as many authors as artists among his friends, and had he chosen to abandon one profession for the other his pen could have supported him. He described Holland as well as it has ever been described and some of his experiments in fiction reached a psychological depth below the surface of lambent pleasantry. One of his stories — "A Bar Sinister" — has not been dislodged from my memory by any of the later adhesions of a quarter of a century, and it holds there through its ineffaceable vividity and originality.

His letters were like his talk, unreserved and spontaneous. I quote only two of them, the longest referring to an article about him which had appeared in a popular magazine:

9 Calverly Park, Tunbridge Wells, July 23, 1900.

My dear Rideing:

I was away from London when your very kind note came to West House, and the scorched soles of my weary feet have had so little rest since that the "happy moments" have not been mine to reply until this peaceful Sunday down here.

It is very interesting, and most flattering to me, that you like the interview so much that you desire further reminiscences and experiences. The article seems to have "caught on" over here, judging by the dozens of press notices that the enterprising clipping bureau has showered upon me. Of course there is a lot more of the same sort of material stowed away in the carefully dusted "pigeon-holes" of my memory. I could have swamped that smiling interviewer with streams of memories — vastly pleasant to me — but as to the wary and easily bored public, I — and he — was not so certain. He was of legal mind and profession, that young man, with a tendency to extract the "evidences" of things, and to let the literary qualities go hang. And what he did not trim off his editor *did*, and made matters of "Grad-

grind" *fact* outstand in all their bare nakedness. The little personal incidents, which he, the interviewer, extracted from me were given by me as showing the little "tides" in my career, which, taken just as they happened instead of some other way, carried me on the way I wanted to go, instead of landing me in some backwater of stagnation. . . . But as the thing seems to please, I suppose *its* way is better than *my* way.

Your proposal is "so sudden," as the old maidens say, that I am blushing with confusion. Like the maidens, I am not *unprepared* for the proposal, as I have been writing a good deal "off and on" (all sorts of stuff) lately; but not any reminiscences. And as I so often delight in my memories of the good people — loved by the world — that it has been my good fortune to know or even meet, I think that some more "memories" might interest the world outside my own little back "pigeon-holes." I saw enough of Dante Rossetti, for instance, to give a charming side of his character not enough dwelt upon by his biographers. Also of Lord Leighton — one of the most splendid fellows I ever met, and whose equal I never expect to see again. And his great quality as a man was supreme personal charm. I never thought to criticize *his* art, or Rossetti's, or Millais's or Browning's, but just to dwell on the rare qualities of character and curious incidents that *reveal* such men.

So, my dear Rideing, you may expect to hear more of this matter from me at an early date. Just now I am resting a bit.

Yours ever,

G. H. Boughton.

9 Calverly Park, Tunbridge Wells, August 26, 1900.

My dear Rideing:

I am afraid I have already exhausted my memories (such as are not *too* personal and private) of Millais and Browning for the benefit of that interviewer. The few other memories of Millais are much on the same line (of his ever-ready kindness). There are many bits of gossip such as are given in two already published biographies. But I don't wish to repeat used-up matter. My other memories, many too personal, are connected with the inner life of the Royal Academy — so "inner" that they are not only "tiled," but quite uninteresting to the average youth. So too of Leighton. *Outside* the Academy walls he was the soul of kindness — but one anecdote would serve as a type of the rest. What took place in his own house is also too sacred (and too remote) for the average reader.

So much for England. Paris I gave as to my master there in the ——.

American memories touched a new field, and a name (in Gifford) that has to be reckoned with, *one* day.

My Durand experience (there was only one) I also gave to the ——. Page I never met. *Voilà!*

Many salutations to you all the same.

Yours ever sincerely,

G. H. Boughton.

Although Boughton was English by birth, and never entirely outgrew the rugged dialect of his native Midlands, his youth in New York had half-Americanized him, and he was often claimed as an American artist. Some of the best of his work depicted scenes in American history, especially those of the Dutch period and that of the first settlement of New England. The gray-green, sandy and low-cliffed coast of Massachusetts, and the ascetic solemnity of Pilgrim and Puritan, sad-faced, heavily hatted, and heavily cloaked, found in him an interpreter as true and as subtle as Hawthorne himself, and he was no less successful in the portrayal of the more humorous and substantial types of New Amsterdam, immitigably Dutch in their transplantation. I think that, though admired by the public, he was appraised higher and more accurately by his fellow painters.

The last time I saw him he was summering at Petersfield and I at Selborne, and I drove part of the way home with him through the pretty region of Gilbert White. He was less animated than usual. Ordinarily he was blithe and jaunty, with a disposition to see the funny side of things in discourse. Now I noted that he was subdued, and he spoke of the ailment which very soon afterward became fatal. To visualize him the reader should think of a rather plain man of medium height and girth, with a round head and a nutty complexion, and merry, inviting eyes of quick observation; leisurely in manner, but full of sensibility; a man of the world,

but not a man of fashion, who might have been passed in the street without recognition as a man of distinction. He was indefatigable in social life, but deferred little to its conventions. I suppose there were functions at which he must have donned a top hat and a Prince Albert coat, but even in the zenith of the London season I never met him in the daytime when he was not wearing a bowler and a jacket suit of cheviot or tweed.

I have seen in print a story that the last of Du Maurier's drawings were made, on account of the impairment of his eyesight, by Miss Du Maurier, who is said to have "caught her father's manner perfectly and reproduced his types and style so as really to justify him in letting the sketches go out as his own, since no one could detect the slightest difference." I don't believe it. I saw him in his studio a short time before his death. He complained of his illness, and especially of insomnia. He told me that he had fallen into the habit of rising very early and going into the street and jumping on to the first 'bus that come along, for the sake of the air. Stratford, Peckham Rye, Islington, Brixton, Highgate or Whitechapel, East or West, North or South — its destination, fashionable or unfashionable, made no difference to him. This was after "Trilby" had filled his pockets: he could have easily afforded a carriage, but he was simple and economical in his tastes. While we talked he was working on a drawing which displayed his talents undimmed and undiminished. It would have been impossible for him to sanction deception.

XIII

GLIMPSES OF LONDON SOCIETY

BOUGHTON, the painter, declared London to be the most hospitable city in the world. "You need not be distinguished or of aristocratic birth, but you must be interesting or have done something interesting — that's all they ask here," he said, speaking of the passports necessary for social recognition.

Without going as far as Boughton, I think there is no other city in the world where one may meet such diversified people under one roof as there, where even modest achievement gains a foothold for itself in the company of prelates and patricians, statesmen and leaders of the professions, both learned and artistic. Literature, science, and art are recognized socially to a greater extent than elsewhere, though, to be sure, there are some houses which, more than others, restrict themselves to people of their own class and political or religious affiliation.

Let me recall a house in Harley Street where at luncheon, dinner, or in the drawing-room you were sure to meet most of the celebrities of the day. There you might see the dapper Lord Roberts, the taciturn Kitchener, and the vivacious Wolseley. Whatever party was in power, whether the prime minister was Mr. Gladstone, oracular and gracious, or Lord Salisbury, reticent and cold, or Mr. Balfour, debonair, smiling, and suave — the prime minister came, and between him and

a duchess might be placed Henry Irving (one could never meet him that he did not ask one to something, to supper in the Beefsteak Room or to a tremendous dinner), or Ellen Terry (who to the children of the house was always "Aunt Nellie"), or George Grossmith, or Lord Kelvin, or Lord Leighton, or the lord chief justice; while somewhere down the table you might find a new-born dramatist whose piece had just been produced, or a young novelist who had done something out of the common, or some one like Burnham, the American scout, after his return from service against the Boers in South Africa. Trojan and Tyrian sat peacefully at the same table — judges and barristers, Liberals and Conservatives, Irish Nationalists and Unionists, such as Colonel Sanderson, the belligerent member for Ulster; ambassadors, editors, and actors. But no one was there who had not won distinction of some kind.

I will call the hostess Lady B ——. *Punch* had a picture of Stanley in the African bush with a bushman saluting him as he pushed through the jungle.

"We have met before," says the bushman, to the surprise of the explorer.

"Indeed! Where?"

"At Lady B ——'s."

One day, when I was making a call, we spoke of a brilliant and erratic man who had come to grief in a recent scandal. He had been convicted of perjury, and had disappeared from the haunts in New York and London where his wit had made him welcome.

With a sly look from her husband to me, she said: "He was so nice, and isn't it a pity? But I dare say that the next time you come to England you'll find him here again."

"Never!" cried her husband, who was one of the most distinguished of English judges. "I" — with extreme emphasis on the pronoun — "I draw the line at those who have been in jail."

"Oh, don't be so narrow, dear," she protested. "They are the most interesting people in the world."

Diversified as the guests were and dissimilar in creed, station, politics, and occupations, the influence of her personality was always sufficient to reconcile them and interest them in one another. Politics and religion were of course, always eschewed in conversation, but ample latitude was given for the amicable discussion of other topics. As an instance of this freedom, I remember that at one of the dinners, which included several peers, an aggressive and satirical young man who edited one of the leading English reviews declared: "There's nothing I enjoy more than rejecting an article by a member of the House of Lords. He's sure to be a duffer!"

Did their lordships bridle and darken? Did the others show anxiety — the hostess alarm? Not a bit of it. Everybody laughed.

"You do occasionally publish articles by such people, the Duke of Marlborough for instance," one of the peers suggested, referring not to the present duke but to his father.

"Ah, yes! But see what a blackguard he is! He's quite eligible on that account."

Thereupon he launched out into derision of England. As all who ride in omnibuses know, the scale of fares in England is often based on the distance between one tavern and another, as between the Red Lion and the Angel, or between the Cat and the Fiddle and the Elephant and Castle. "The only country in the world that measures its stages from pub to pub," he cried scorn-

fully, making this but one count in a comprehensive indictment of England's depravity. Nobody minded. They all took him humorously. He was one of the successes of the dinner. And I may add that, of all people, the Englishman of modern society is the least touchy under criticism. He likes nothing more than raillery against his national foibles. And this critic was a professional railer; he was then the editor of an important review.

One night I sat at the right of Lord Randolph Churchill, who was only one chair removed from the host, and the conversation between them turned on the difficulties of public speaking. "Have you ever been embarrassed by finding that after telling your audience there were three points to which you particularly wished to call their attention, and elaborating the first two, you could not remember a word of what you meant to say on the third?"

The question was asked by the host.

Lord Randolph was then plainly a doomed and shattered man. He shook as if in a palsy; his voice was woolly and stuttering, almost unintelligible. The ladies had retired to the drawing-room, and he put on the table before him a case of cigarettes, which he smoked greedily. Only half the case held cigarettes; the other half was filled with cotton wool, a fresh piece of which he rammed into his amber holder for each smoke, his purpose being, I suppose, to reduce the nicotine. But notwithstanding his battered appearance, his mind seemed as acute as ever.

"Yes," he replied, out of a cloud of smoke, "that has happened to me more than once, but it never gave me trouble. I found an easy way out.

'Gentlemen,' I have said to them, 'I told you that there were three things which I desired to emphasize. I have mentioned two, only two. Much more, very much more could be said, but I appeal to your intelligence. Is it necessary for me to go any further? to waste any more of your time or my own on a question, the answer to which is so obvious? Haven't I said enough to convince you as fully as I am convinced myself?' They have been quite satisfied with this, and while they were applauding I have swung into another part of the subject. Gross duplicity, but it has saved me as, sometimes, only duplicity will do."

At another dinner I sat next to a plump and florid lady of most discomposing urgency. I had not met her before, and was ignorant even of her name. She preened herself for a moment, and then, without any preliminaries beyond a glance down the table, a pick at her skirt, and a touch of her tiara, plunged the question, with her eyes disturbingly focused on mine: "Do you believe in platonic love?"

It struck me that this was not quite fair —that she ought to have given me some warning. With a consciousness of fatuity and futility, I shambled into the reply, "Let me think about it, but in the meantime hadn't you better ask Lord B —— ?"

I had presence of mind enough, at all events, to refer her to the proper quarter for information. Lord B —— had the misfortune, as he put it, to preside in that court which is more likely than any other experience to make a cynic of a man.

"Lord B —— do you believe in platonic love?"

He lost no time in his answer: "I have heard of it, but I never met a case of it in the divorce court."

He was one of the most delightful men I have ever had the good fortune to meet; lofty in thought and dignified in bearing, impressive in appearance and in voice, simple in taste and manner, kind beyond words, and, like his wife, never happier than when surrounded by their multitudinous friends.

Strange as it may seem, the judges who try divorce cases in England are also judges of probate and of admiralty. I remember Lord B —— saying to me, in reference to an admiralty case he had tried, that the only conclusion you could come to from the evidence in cases of collision at sea was that no collision had occurred, because by the testimony, the captain and crew of each ship had strictly and scrupulously obeyed the rules of the road, so that collision must have been impossible.

Taking the liveliest interest in his maritime cases, he decided on one occasion to make a personal test of the colour sense of two captains who were in dispute before him, and took them with him to those disastrous Channel shoals, the Goodwin Sands, near the estuary of the Thames, where passes inward and outward the most important part of the empire's traffic. Neither of the men could distinguish in the dark between the reds and greens of the steering-lights, and they were also bewildered by the vagaries of the transmission of sound through fogs.

Most of the judges and many barristers were, of course, frequent among the guests of that house. I have been at the Royal Courts of Justice in the afternoon, and watched them, gowned and bewigged, at their solemn work — the judges precise, austere, portentous, Rhadamanthine; the barristers deferential, ingratiating, and all attention. Then they have assembled at dinner

in the evening, like Olympians descending from their pedestals, as worldly-wise, as merry, and as familiar as common mortals. Who could have been more human and amusing than the late Lord Chief Justice Russell of Killowen (once Sir Charles Russell), a stately, handsome man of commanding presence; or his successor, the present Lord Chief Justice Alverstone, who, when he can be persuaded to sing after dinner, may select W. S. Gilbert's nonsensical song from "Trial by Jury," and rattle it off with the greatest spirit — the song in which the judge describes his early days when he had

> A couple of shirts and a collar or two,
> And a ring that looked like a ruby.

The late Justice Day was another guest, he upon whose name was obvious and easy play. In criminal trials he was so severe that he became "Judgment Day"; when he married, 'Wedding Day"; at Bristol, "Day of Reckoning"; and one day when he was seen to nod on the bench, "Day of Rest." Once, when he was trying a case, a prolix barrister tried his patience, and at the end of a long and tedious speech spoke of some bags which were in question. "They might, me lud, have been full bags, or half-full bags, or again they might have been empty bags."

"Quite so, quite so," the judge assented, adding dryly and significantly: "Or they might have been wind bags."

On one occasion the conversation turned to the thoroughness of the administration of the law in Great Britain. "We *sweat* the law in England to get all the justice out of it we can," declared a vivacious gentleman who sat next to me, and I infer that no one doubted his

sincerity or the truth of what he said. He soon drifted into a very different topic, and showed his preference for it — the turf. He was called "the sporting judge," and it was whispered that at dawn on the days before the Derby you could find him in mufti on Epsom Downs, a cloth cap on his head, following the horses as they were exercised, and making up his mind about them before he took the train to town for his seat on the bench. He was jokingly asked for "tips," and, after protesting that they were worth nothing, offered one "for a consideration." What was the "consideration" to be? "The best golf ball that can be bought in England."

Gossip said that his knowledge of the turf had helped him to the bench. At the races, the wife of a lord chancellor asked him to put a trifle for her on a horse of his own selection. He did so, and won. When he handed the winnings to her she complimented him.

"What an excellent judge you are."

And, as he bowed, he whispered, "Please say that to the lord chancellor. I am not as good a judge as he can make me."

His appointment followed. But that was probably a mere coincidence, if it was not invented out of whole cloth for the sake of the story. He was an ornament to the bench, learned and enlightened, witty, human — a popular judge, if such a thing can be.

"You'll be kind to us if any of us are brought before you?" some one inquired. His face, as mobile as an actor's, wrinkled, and he pricked the questioner with his poignant eyes. "I shall surely see that justice is done," he replied dryly, leaving an implication, tacit but unescapable, that innocence would not be taken for granted.

That a man in his position should be an avowed lover of the turf may ruffle American prejudices, but it is to be remembered that horse-racing is the national sport of the United Kingdom; it attracts all classes, and nearly every man, from king to cabman, puts "a bit on the 'osses."

Argument and long speeches being discouraged, the talk at such houses is likely to be desultory; one often wished that one could have an expansion of what came to one only in provoking fragments. There were flares, without lasting illumination. A ball was neatly thrown and caught, and while one was admiring the skill with which two players were handling it between them, it passed to the other end of the table and dropped out of sight.

The late Lord Dufferin came in to luncheon very late one day, and after he had apologized to the hostess, he whispered to me that he had been detained at his home by the late Earl of Kimberley. "A wonderful man — a fascinating man! It is amazing how much he knows. He knows everything — everything! — all the corners of the earth and all the men in it. Except," — a pause — "except when to stop."

Discretion of that kind is essential in London nowadays. Doctor Johnson would not be tolerated, and Macaulay, rightly indignant, would go home surcharged with the undistributed and pent-up encyclopædic erudition which a frivolous world, unappreciative of its needs, turns its back on.

Of course a few bores were there, but they were rare. They were apt to be of the kind that favours the paradox and the inversion, the fashionable trick of flouting the orthodox and the conventional, and saying the exact

opposite of what is expected. Sometimes that passes for wit, or honest revolt, but it takes an Oscar Wilde, or a Shaw to make it illusive and more than a transparent and laborious trick.

Ada Rehan was another frequent guest — "Aunt Ada" to the children, who were as much at home behind the scenes in the evening with her, or with "Aunt Nellie," as they were in their own house.

The stage in England is a part of society. Not long ago I picked up a century-old biographical dictionary of actors, and looked up their parentage. They nearly all were the offspring of people in humble circumstances, who also had been actors or innkeepers, wig makers, and small tradesmen. Refer to the last edition of "Who's Who," and see how many of them are college and university men, who have left the law or medicine, or the army or the navy, to wear the sock and buskin without reproach. You meet actors constantly in English society, not merely those who are famous, like Irving or Tree, but also those who are novices in the profession. I remember seeing Henry Irving implored by a personage of the highest rank to visit him, and how curtly and with ill-concealed indifference Irving "turned down" — the slang somehow fits the incident — what might have seemed to be a conspicuous honour. And some of us are left who can recall a dinner at which a lord chief justice, when invited to respond to the toast of "England," replied that as Irving was present he was the better man for the ceremony.

Nor do I forget how Sarah Bernhardt once kept us waiting nearly an hour for luncheon. For the rest of us it may not have mattered, but Mr. Balfour was there detained beyond his usual hour for getting to the House of Commons. When she came in, radiant and childishly

unconscious of delinquency, we all could have excused him if he had revealed a little coolness and impatience. He had been restless and anxious before, but as soon as she came he fell under her spell, as Antony under Cleopatra's, and, without a word or look of upbraiding, devoted himself to her for fully another half hour — meanwhile leaving us in apprehension lest the empire should disintegrate in the absence of that astute and faithful helmsman.

One could not help contrasting Ellen Terry and Ada Rehan, the former so volatile and demonstrative, so suggestive of her art, the latter so shy and uncommunicative, so sparing in the use of that melodious voice which thrilled us in the theatre. I once urged Miss Rehan to write her reminiscences.

"Ah, no!" she sighed. "I'm not a writer; I'm nothing but an actress. I believe the cobbler is wise in sticking to his last."

She was always unaffectedly diffident as to her abilities, even when in her ascendancy she had three countries at her feet.

One saw many contrasts there — Thomas Hardy, small, retiring, sensitive, melancholy, self-effacing, and Harold Frederic, an overgrown boy of thirty-odd, exuberant, beaming, self-confident, and cocksure, who could talk about himself and his achievements by the hour and make us glow over them as much as he himself did. What would have offended in another became mysteriously charming in him. He made egotism pleasant by hypnotizing us into his own point of view, and his glory became ours.

When he told us how he had made Grover Cleveland President of the United States, we had to believe him;

and when he declared that if he chose he could be President himself, it did not seem in the least ridiculous. He had the complacency and assurance of a boastful boy, and yet, instead of being odious, his defects were transmuted and struck us only as a vein of engaging and humorous ingenuousness.

After all, self-appreciation is sincere, while self-depreciation may be open to suspicion. People differed about him, as they do about all of us, but most of us found him lovable without shutting our eyes to his faults, which were those of irresponsiblity, fortuity, and instability, rather than of premeditation or hardness.

Generous and infectiously good-humoured with those he cared for, he was a fierce champion of their perfection and would not compromise on less than the admission of that. He did not discriminate when friendship bound him; the enemy of a friend became his enemy, and he espoused his friend's cause as relentlessly as though it had been his own. He was always holding a brief for some one.

Only great persuasion could bring him out to such parties as I have been describing. He had a coterie of his own which he preferred — authors, politicians, painters, and actors. You could find him at the Savage Club, or the National Liberal Club, among the Radicals and Irish Nationalists. Most of his work was done in dingy and haunted chambers in Furnival's Inn, and some of it in the suburban villa he had at Surbiton, which he called Oneida Lodge, after his native place, a name distorted, much to his amusement, by those who came to the back door, into "One-eyed Lodge."

It was strange to see the Marquis of Dufferin and Frederic at the same table, for in Frederic's novel, "The

Market Place," that nobleman — under a fictitious name, of course — had been portrayed as the dupe of the upstart financier, whose original was plainly drawn from Whittaker Wright, the blower of bubbles, the prodigious swindler, who, when he found English law inexorable, poisoned himself in the dock as soon as a long-term sentence on him had been pronounced.

The novel could not have been pleasant to Lord Dufferin, for, though his counterfeit was illusory in the text, the illustrator drew an unmistakable likeness of him in the pictures; the graceful figure, the high-browed, intellectual head, and the courtier-like mien. You could never have seen him for a moment without recognizing in him a distinguished man. There was not a bit of pomposity about him. He was full of humour and sympathy; but below the smiling surface one could perceive the diplomat, cautious, discriminating, and deliberate, who made all his contacts provisionally and sensed them through invisible antennæ. That in the end he could become the dupe of such a man as Whittaker Wright is incomprehensible and inexplicable. He emerged from that scandal with his honour untarnished and his fortune gone; it probably was the irreparable wound to his pride that killed him.

I must not leave the reader with the idea that Thomas Hardy is always sombre. I think he resents being classed as a pessimist. The humour that flashes in his novels streaks and illumines his conversation also. One day we left a luncheon party together, and he looked comically at the ruffled and veined nap of his hat. "I had meant to get a new one," he sighed, "but then my publisher sent my copyright account, and I couldn't."

At another luncheon, the host exhibited some trophies of travel, including the war club of Sitting Bull. As Hardy swung the weapon, which taxed his strength, he murmured, "How much I should like to have that in my hand when I encounter the critic who calls 'Jude the Obscure,' 'Jude the Obscene'!"

A little laughter did not relieve the embarrassment of some of us who heard him, for the culprit was among us. She was the lady who had sat next to him.

The company always included many delightful women, and I remember the consternation caused among them one day by Burnham, the scout. He explained that he attributed his success as a scout to the acuteness of his sense of smell; it was like a bloodhound's. "There's no one here to-day," he affirmed, "who at any time anywhere in the future I could not recognize in the dark. Yes, I could tell *you*, and *you*, and *you*," nodding at an alluring group in modish apparel, "by the way you smell."

For an awful moment the conversation flagged.

Sir Charles Wyndham, brisk, natty, and sparkling, with a tonic autumnal air about him, came one day a week ahead of the hour for which he had been invited. He did not mind it in the least, and was, of course, welcomed. The hostess inferred that as he had come then, he would consider the later date as cancelled. Not he! Next week he reappeared at the hour originally appointed, and, after some confusion and explanations, he cheerfully and imperturbably declared that no further misunderstandings could possibly occur; "for," he said, "I shall come every week from now on, and so nobody can be disappointed."

XIV

CHARLES READE AND MRS. OLIPHANT

AN author nas no ıonger any occasion to blow his own trumpet. For a consideration any literary agent will sound it for him in blasts loud enough to bring down anything, old or new, the walls of Jericho itself or an American "skyscraper." He may be naturally shy and modest, a humble creature unpractised in affairs, dubious of his merits, ignorant of prices current, incredulous that his novel or poem can have any pecuniary value. He may be diffidence itself in private, but when he puts himself into the hands of a literary agent he is sure to be introduced to the editor by that exigent delegate as a paragon of the special merit that "sells," and his commercial value is extolled and emphasized more than all else.

"Probably you are aware that Mr. Jones commands better terms than any other living author," the agent writes to the editor, forgetting that he has used precisely the same formula in regard to Smith and Robinson a little earlier, and that editors are not always fools, or without memories, and a knowledge of their own trade. "I propose," the agent continues, when he calls, "that, the serial rights and the rights of dramatization being reserved by my client, you shall pay him one shilling and sixpence royalty for every copy of the book sold at six shillings, and that you shall at once advance him several hundred pounds

on account of royalties that may become due in the future."

As he listens, the editor droops in his chair, while the agent smiles and produces ingenious figures to prove that the demands are not extortionate, but leave a possible though remote profit to him, the party of the second part. Then, if the manuscript is what he feels he must have because it is really good, or because it will serve for advertisement, he submits, after a struggle for abatement, biting his lips, perhaps, as he does so, and reviling what he feels to be in the language of the Wild West, a "hold-up."

It is not to be inferred that every author, or the average author, is as simple as Jones, personally, or needs an agent to proclaim him. Some of them — I do not say all — are as astute in driving a bargain as any literary agent can be, and come into the market on the same level and in the same spirit as a seller of so much merchandise. "I write," said one not long ago, "as if there was no such thing as money in the world, and when I sell I sell as if money were the only thing in the world" — an attitude not indefensible and not uncommon. The publisher complains, often in a strain of sentiment and pathos, and I have known even a literary agent to say that the author expects everything and objects to everything. "The only thing that satisfies him is being paid, and, if possible, being paid twice over." Undoubtedly he has become more sordid, or it may be fairer to say, more business-like, under the influence and instruction of the agent, who occasionally finds a once tractable and complaisant client transformed into a Frankenstein. I like, however, to see the author having his turn, for until recent years he has been the under dog in the

struggle for an equitable division of the money his work has produced. The publisher has often had the cream though not always.

Tennyson, especially, and Thackeray and Dickens knew how to take care of themselves. We smile as we recall Thackeray in his early days making a desperate effort to dissemble his rejoicing at an offer much larger than he expected, and before him was Gibbon who instructed Lord Sheffield as to how that nobleman should negotiate with Nichols, the publisher, in his behalf. His lordship was to speak of the prospective book as if the idea came from himself, "as it is most essential that I be solicited, and do not solicit." "Then," wrote Gibbon, "if he (Nichols) kindles at the thought and eagerly claims my alliance, you (Lord Sheffield) will begin to hesitate. 'I am afraid, Mr. Nichols,' you say, 'that we can hardly persuade my friend to engage in so great a work. Gibbon is old, and rich, and lazy. However, you may make the trial.'"

Was the trick ever played more cannily? Could any salt for a bird's tail have more efficacy? Still I think that among authors in their business affairs there are and have been more geese than such foxes as Gibbon was in this instance. Why should we wonder if, at the end of a long period of ignorance or of indifference to commercial values, they strain them out of due proportion when they discover them, and lose sight of all else? The corollary is inevitable, and equity in suspense.

All this is a roundabout approach to saying that in a varied editorial experience of more years than I can acknowledge with equanimity, I met only one author who thought that what we offered him for some of his

work was too much; and, strange to relate, that was Charles Reade.

He had then lost his pretty house in Knightsbridge, that "Naboth's Vineyard," as he called it, against the loss of which he had fought with characteristic energy through long years in both the courts and parliament, and had moved to Shepherd's Bush, a choice that seemed to me to be unaccountable and incredible. Of all places in the world, one wondered, why Shepherd's Bush? And why Blomfield Villas of all places there? As I sought the house I thought that I must have made some mistake, and that none of those rows of stucco-fronted, small, vulgar, utterly undistinguished domiciles, detached and semi-detached, in stony, pocket-handkerchief gardens, could possibly contain the great man I was looking for. The neighbourhood spoke of city clerks, shopmen, and retired people — not "nice" retired people, half-pay officers and such, but retired plumbers, greengrocers, buttermen, and publicans, or, as they like to be called, "licensed victuallers." Here and there one of them could be seen pottering, shirt-sleeved, in his crowded and heterogeneous garden, with an air of stolid satisfaction, his old briar fondly held between his pursy lips, and the fat of plethoric nourishment shining on his face, a solid, documentary proof that I was astray. When I came to the number given to me I hesitated before I rang the bell, I was so confident of the futility of my inquiry, and the reply of the maid who answered the bell — "Yes, this is Mr. Reade's" — had to be repeated before it penetrated me.

Yes, this was Mr. Reade's, and I was shown into a littered and cramped study, corresponding to the drawing-room of the other houses, its shelves loaded by a

series of scrap-books bursting with clippings on every subject from newspaper articles. Occasionally, perhaps, he found inspiration and suggestions in them, for he always insisted that truth was stranger than fiction — and in that I might concur, taking Blomfield Villas, as an example — but my impression is that those time-stained and bulging archives had their chief use in confounding the critics who ventured to challenge what seemed to be impossibilities in his works. Was it in "Foul Play," or another story, that a white whale appeared? And did some scribe say that a white whale could not have been in the latitude and longitude given? Down came one of the scrap-books, and down its weight on the head of that critic, leaving him not a breath for rebuttal, or a leg to stand on. Within it was a faded extract from the log of a ship that had reported the phenomenon in the very spot Reade had placed it. And I believe that in such an achievement as this he took as much pride as in one of the best chapters of "The Cloister and the Hearth." If he could not demolish them he loved to confuse those who "called him down," and the scrap-books were his arsenal.

I thought, in the timidity of my inexperience at that period, he meant to assault me as he burst into the room, seeming to bring with him a gale that rattled the house and all its doors and windows. There was a lot of what Mr. H. G. Wells calls "projectile violence" about him. I had written a little article of badinage in the *Atlantic Monthly* pointing out some amusing errors of his in the American scenes of "The Wandering Heir," or "Single-heart and Doubleface," and for a moment I feared — forgetting that it was unsigned — my sins were to overtake me there and then. But the tornado was of sound

only, the breath of an impulsive and impetuous temperament, which at heart was essentially fine and gentle. Passing, it left in its place a presence which, though dogmatic, was far from disagreeable.

Following that visit to Blomfield Villas, I had a long letter from him which seems to me to be an epitome of the complex variety of his qualities, and in printing it I should explain in reference to one of its passages that I had asked him to write a serial story for the *Youth's Companion*, whose editors then thought an amorous interest unwise in view of the precocity of some of their readers:

Hotel Splendide, Cannes, 28 Jan'y, '84.

DEAR SIR:

I beg to thank you for the munificent sum you sent me through Mr. Liston; it was too much for a mere dictated article of which you had not the monopoly; and shall be reconsidered if we do business together.

I must now tell you the real reason of my delaying so long to write to you: Your often repeated wish to have something from my pen, and your liberality had made me desirous to let you have something good; now I have observed that it is extremely difficult for any author to increase the circulation of an established periodical, and, when it *is* done, fiction is very seldom the happy instrument. However, I have by me, in manuscript, certain true narratives called "Bible Characters," which I think will do a magazine more good than any number of fictions. The subject, of course, is old, but it is as good as new and better; because, up to this date, the treatment of such subjects by French, German, and English writers has been all a mistake, and a truly wonderful one. I cannot in the compass of a letter explain to you the many vital blunders in their treatment: I must confine myself to saying that it is so; and that everybody will see it when my manuscripts are printed.

Well, I must now tell you, under the seal of the most strict and honourable confidence, that I sent to ——— a short preliminary discourse and two Bible characters that pass for small characters only because the divines who have handled them have literally no insight into character whatever. The editor received this instalment of the subject with open arms, but he has been shelving my fictitious stories, and editing me, making unjustifiable and very silly alterations, so that my text and my English copyrights

seem neither of them to be safe in that magazine. I therefore requested him to send me back all my copy *without exception*, and I intended to do you a good turn with the Bible characters, both in your periodical and in book form; and I thought long before this my manuscripts would have come home; but probably my old friends Messrs.———, the publishers, took alarm, and objected to part with them; at all events, the manuscripts were retained, most charming excuses made, and I was requested to reconsider the matter. I was not, on my part, the least disposed to quarrel, it would have been ungrateful; I therefore gave them the alternative under very stringent conditions — no editing, no interruption — when once I begin — and, in short no nonsense of any kind. Now, if they accept these terms they will have the works, and if they do not they will lose them and find their mistake.

If they let them slip, you can have them if you like; if they retain them, I see my way to write you a strong story, but there must be love in it: not illicit love, nor passionate love, but that true affection between the sexes without which it is impossible to interest readers for more than a few pages. Pray consider the subject, thus confined; it cannot be long hidden from the young that there is an innocent and natural love between the sexes, and, in plain truth, successful fiction is somewhat narrow; love is its turnpike road; you may go off that road into highways, into by-ways, and woods, and gather here and there choice flowers of imagination that do not grow at the side of that road; but you must be quick and get back again to your turnpike pretty soon, or you will miss the heart of the reader.

When I return to England and have my books about me, I could write you one good article about men and animals, their friendships, and how the lives of men have been sometimes taken and saved by quadrupeds, fishes, birds, and even reptiles, and could wind up with an exquisite story of how a man's life was once saved by a ladybird; but one such article, with my habits of condensation, would exhaust the whole vein, whereas fiction and biography are unlimited.

Then, as to the remuneration you were kind enough to offer, I do not see how you can afford $ — per page. Publishers will pay for their whistle, like other people, and will buy a name for more than it is worth unless it is connected with work that would be valuable without a name. In my view of things, nothing is good that is not durable, and no literary business can be durable if the author takes all the profit.

In spite of bronchitis, and some strange disorder in the intestines, I am fulfilling an engagement to write a serial story in ——, and I hope to finish it in a month, but I do not think I shall ever again undertake to write a story of that length. After all, condensation is a fine thing, and perhaps a story long enough to excite an interest, and paint characters vividly, a story in which there is no conversation, but only dialogue which rapidly

advances the progress of the action, is more likely to be immortal than those more expanded themes which betray us into diffuseness.

Please make allowances in this letter for any defects arising from dictation. I am not yet a good hand at that practice.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES READE.

In that letter we have the man as he was, as he saw himself, and as he revealed himself: Knowing better what a periodical wanted than its editors, and more of the Bible than the theologian: level-headed in such axioms as "nothing is good that is not durable"; arrogant as to conditions and fair-minded as to rewards; broad and liberal here, narrow and prejudiced there; sound in business; direct in method; all, and above all, imperious and confidently omniscient, a nineteenth century Don Quixote.

"The truth is that fiction is a more severe mistress than people think," he wrote to me later. "An imaginative writer often begins his career with subjects independent of sexual love, but his readers, and especially his female readers, soon show him that they won't stand it, and so they drag him out of the by-paths of invention and force him into the turnpike road, until at last their habit becomes his, and I suppose his mind accepts the groove."

James Payn had his little joke at the exclusion of sexual love from a story he attempted for the same periodical. "Never," he wrote, "since the Israelite was requested to make bricks without straw by his Egyptian master, was employé so put to it. I am bound to say that, though amply remunerated, that story" (his own) "did not turn out a success. Think of Hamlet with not only the prince left out, but also the ghost! My position

seems to me to be similar to that of woman in conversation. Almost everything that is really interesting is tabooed to her."

I may add that our women contributors never found any difficulty in or objection to the restriction, nor did the interest of their work suffer from it. Mrs. Macquoid, the author of "Patty," whom I used to see at her old house in the King's Road, Chelsea, where she lived for many years; Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, a girl at eighty; Louisa M. Alcott, retired at Concord; and Mrs. Oliphant in her lodgings in Ebury Street or at Windsor or Wimbledon — they never murmured against Moses, or complained that they were asked to make bricks without straw, because passion and superstition were eschewed.

Mrs. Oliphant gave us some of her best work, and that, as I appraise it, came very near to the best of any woman novelist in English literature. The little it lacked in the measure of perfection could be charged to the harassing conditions of pressure and distraction under which it was produced. Her characters were never wraiths or puppets, or like the stamped patterns on wall-papers: they lived for us; we saw them back and front, within and without, through their bodies to their souls; and when they died they filled us with such a sense of desolation and of echoing void in the house of mourning as we received from that vivid scene of death in her "Country Gentleman." The wolf howled at her door, while her children clung to her skirts like the daughters of the horse-leech, crying, "Give, give." Much of her writing was done late at night. She told me that this had become a habit with her since her children's infancy, when it was necessary to have them in bed before she took up her pen, and it

persisted after they grew up. A glass of sherry sustained her in it.

"Yes," she complained, "it has been my fate to be credited with the equivocal virtue of industry, a quality excellent in morals, but alas! so little satisfactory in art."

She sustained herself under what she vividly called a "cheerful despair." Nothing in her stories, vibrant with the understanding of anguish as they are, is more pathetic than her own account of her situation after her husband's death. The Blackwoods referred to are, of course, those of the famous Edinburgh house:

I was poor, having only my own exertions to depend on, though always possessing an absolute-foolish courage (so long as the children were well, my one formula) in life and providence. But I had not been doing well for some time. It will perhaps not be wondered at, considering the circumstances. My contributions sent from Italy, where I had passed a year watching my husband's waning life, had been, as I can see through the revelations of Blackwood letters, pushed about from pillar to post, these kind-hearted men not willing to reject what they knew to be so important to me, yet caring but little for them, using them when there happened to be a scarcity of material; and after my return things were little better. . . . Why I should have formed the idea that in these circumstances, when there was every appearance that my literary gift, such as it was, was failing me, they would be likely to entertain a proposal from me for a serial story, I can scarcely now tell; but I was rash and in need. . . . I walked up to George Street, up the steep hill, with my heart beating, not knowing (though I might very well have divined) what they would say to me. There was, indeed, only one thing they could say. They shook their heads: they were very kind, very unwilling to hurt the feelings of the poor young woman, with the heavy widow's veil hanging about her like a cloud. No; they did not think it was possible. I remember very well how they stood against the light, the major tall and straight, John Blackwood with his shoulders hunched up in his more careless bearing, embarrassed and troubled by what they saw and no doubt guessed in my face, while on my part every faculty was absorbed in the desperate pride of a woman not to let them see me cry, to keep in until I could get out of their sight. . . . I went home to find my little ones all gay and sweet, and was occupied by them for the rest of the day in a sort

of cheerful despair — distraught, yet as able to play as ever (which they say is part of a woman's natural duplicity and dissimulation). But when they had all gone to bed, and the house was quiet, I sat down — and I don't know when, or if at all, I went to bed that night; but next day (I think) I had finished and sent up to the dread tribunal in George Street a short story, which was the beginning of a series of stories called the "Chronicles of Carlingford," which set me up at once and established my footing in the world.

XV

JAMES PAYN

ONLY the other day I was amused by a paragraph, the writer of which, searching for a figure to illustrate something dead — very dead — satisfied himself with "as dead as yesterday's novel." In the flood of modern fiction, little — minnow or herring — survives, and what is good is often swamped by what is merely new.

Thirty years ago James Payn was one of the "best sellers," as the word goes. His novels reappeared, after the first three-volume edition for the circulating libraries had worn itself out, in cloth at six shillings, and still later in those old-fashioned picture boards at two shillings or half a crown, which made a gaudy and eye-catching display on every railway book-stall in England.

In every colony and in America they were familiar. One of them, "Lost Sir Massingbird," had an extraordinary vogue, which put him on a footing not far behind that of Wilkie Collins and Miss Braddon. It had been issued serially in a weekly, and had gladdened the publisher's heart by doing what every publisher hopes for whenever a manuscript is accepted — hopes for, not with confidence, but with misgivings that experience too often corroborates. It sent the circulation of that periodical up by leaps and bounds, by thousands of copies. The missing baronet eluded the reader pro-

vokingly until the author in his dénouement chose to reveal him.

It established Payn commercially in the trade as a money-maker, the only kind of author publishers welcome: it charmed the young Duke of Albany, and frequently thereafter Payn became a guest at Claremont. But he was more than a knitter of plots. He had a fluid and limpid style, akin to that of Mr. Howells, as airily natural, if less subtle, and, instead of the gravity of Wilkie Collins, who was as ponderous as a judge on the bench, he had an abounding and permeating humour which was always peeping out and slyly laughing round the corner. Perhaps he laughed in his sleeve at his own melodrama, though he resented all criticism that imputed a lack of painstaking in his work.

Humour was his strongest point, and it was lambent humour, expressed in happy turns of thought and unexpected inversions, over which one chuckled rather than guffawed, as one does over Stockton's stories.

An example of this humour is an account he gave me of a paper he edited while he was a cadet at Woolwich, ostensibly for his fellow students, but really for his own pleasure, in making known those early writings of his which had no chance elsewhere. He had one chum named Raymond, who could draw; another named Jones, who could write like print; and a third named Barker, who had a taste for finance.

Payn provided the literary part, which Raymond illustrated, and Jones made as many copies as were needed. The circulation of the paper was left to Barker, who fixed the price at sixpence a copy. Their schoolfellows did not appreciate the venture, but Barker was the treasurer of the school and held in trust for the

scholars a certain fund out of which he had to give them two shillings weekly for pocket-money. Seeing that they would not buy the paper willingly, he calmly deducted sixpence from each allowance, and gave a copy of the paper to make up for it.

"The 'masses' never know what is good for them," Payn said, in referring to this, "and our school-fellows were no exception to the rule; they called Barker a Jew, and, so to speak, 'murmured against Moses.' He was tall and strong, and fought at least half a dozen pitched battles for the maintenance of his objects. I think he persuaded himself, like Charles I, that he was really in the right, and set down their opposition to mere 'impatience of taxation,' but in the end they were one too many for him, and, indeed, much more than one. He fell fighting, no doubt, in the sacred cause of literature, but also for his own sixpences, for we, the workers, never saw one penny of them."

What of "Lost Sir Massingbird" now? At the booksellers' you may ask in vain for it, or for any of the seventy-five or eighty novels he wrote, and the easiest way to find it would be to uproot a dog-eared, brownish, smelly and bethumbed copy from the shelf of some suburban or provincial library, whose readers, when unable to get the newest novel, quietly and without complaint divert themselves and are happy with forsaken books for which elsewhere there is "no call."*

Payn himself was more interesting than any of his novels, and more of a "character" than any of his fictitious personages, though he was, in his virtues and in his defects, only a typical Englishman of his class — one of those who value above all things what is sensible and

*Since this was written, a sixpenny reprint of "Lost Sir Massingbird" has appeared.

Courtesy of the S. S. McClure Co.

JAMES PAYN

what is sincere. Patient and generous with other faults and impositions, he was militant against humbug in every shape, and it was the only thing of which he was suspicious and against which he was bitter. I write of him as a friend and as an admirer, but I fear I must confess that he discredited some things for no better reason than his inability to understand or appreciate them. He discredited every form of the occult, the esoteric, the æsthetic, and the mystical. And in that was he not sufficiently like thousands of his countrymen to justify us in speaking of him as a type?

As a publisher's reader he rejected "John Inglesant," and never recanted his opinion of it, though he was hard hit by its immediate acceptance and success through another house. I shrink from saying how many conventional things he did not care for.

Educated at Eton, Woolwich, and Cambridge, he hated Greek and never acquired a foreign language, not even a tourist's French or Italian, as Sir Leslie Stephen has said. Nor is he alone among Englishmen there, if we are candid. I repeat that there are thousands of others like him: Herbert Spencer did not swallow all the classics, ancient or modern, and disparaged Homer, Plato, Dante, Hegel, and Goethe. A smaller man than the philosopher, Payn resembled him in courage and frankness, and probably he did not overestimate the number of people who admire books they do not read and praise pictures they do not understand.

He did not thunder anathemas, like a Lawrence Boythorn, against the things he challenged and opposed. He spoke of them rather with a plaintive amazement at their existence, and protested rather than denounced. At the end of his charge his pale and mild face had the

troubled look of one who sees error only to grieve over it. He was never boisterous, though he had a ringing laugh. One day, at the Reform Club, that laugh disturbed a testy member, who said in a voice loud enough to carry, as he meant it should, "That man has a mouth like a gorilla's." Payn heard it, and instantly flung over his shoulder the retort, "Yes, but I never could swallow you."

Those of us who have the dubious blessing of an imagination nearly always anticipate a meeting with the people we have heard of or known only through correspondence, and, as I have already said, out of the slenderest material, boldly draw imaginary portraits of them which are curiously and fantastically wide of the mark. I remember dining at the House of Commons one night — one of many nights — with that most genial of hosts, Justin M'Carthy, and being introduced to a tall, smiling, hesitating man, who seemed embarrassed by an inexplicable shyness. His smile had a womanly softness. From his appearance it was possible to surmise a sort of amiable ineffectiveness. I gasped and doubted my ears when I caught his name. It was Charles Stewart Parnell. I had always pictured him as stern, immutable, forbidding, dark in colouring, and rigid in feature. That was the impression that all his photographs gave, for in his, as in all cases, photographs do not preserve or convey complexions or the full value of expressions. I am inclined to believe, however, that the real Parnell was little different in character from what he seemed to be in that glimpse I had of him in the House. His lieutenant and abettor in the stormy days and nights of obstruction, F. Hugh O'Donnell, has since declared that he, Parnell, was the very reverse of the strong and far-

seeing statesman which popular legend and party calculation combined to invent. Long after his death, Lord Morley has admitted that Parnell never possessed a shred of constructive ability . . . "His distinction, his Anglo-Irish lineage, connected with some of the best patriotic traditions, had all pointed him out to the undistinguished leaders of the vast hosts of national discontent, who, without prestige themselves, all the more eagerly desired a figure-head who should possess that quality at least. Parnell's family pride and personal vanity did the rest. He was literally incapable of rejecting the tinsel crown, even on the terms of the Land League. . . . I knew that with all his weakness and all his shutting fast the eyes to hideous facts, Parnell loathed his Land League surroundings. His contempt for his members of Parliament passed the limits of common courtesy, and far exceeded the limits of common prudence."

It is M'Carthy who tells of a man who, longing to meet Herbert Spencer, sat next to him through a long dinner without recognizing him.

"I thought I was to meet Spencer," he murmured to his host.

"Haven't you met him? This is Herbert Spencer."

This — this quiet man at his elbow, whose diffidence had made conversation impossible!

"Yes, I am Herbert Spencer," the philosopher admitted, in the deprecatory voice of a culprit.

Of course I made a guess at Payn when he invited me to visit him at Folkestone, where, one summer in the early eighties, he was sharing a villa near the Lees with Sir John Robinson, then manager of the *Daily News*, who was one of the most devoted and intimate of his

friends. He was by my inference to be a dashing, flaring, sounding, facetious person, on the evidence of a string of humorous stories he had gathered together under the appropriate head of "In High Spirits." I had heard something of his escapades in the days when he was a cadet at Woolwich — of how, stranded in London after a holiday, he had raised the money necessary to take him and a friend back to the Academy by playing the part of a street preacher and passing his hat among the crowd at the end of the service.

After leaving Woolwich he had been to Cambridge with the intention of preparing for the Church — a facile change of course taken without any change of heart or stability of purpose. His natural bent toward literature reasserted its claim, and it was fostered, cautiously and temperately, by a friend and neighbour of his father's who lived at Swallowfield, near Maidenhead. This was Mary Russell Mitford, of "Our Village." She objected to his making a professon of it, and recommended it as an avocation, not as a vocation. He lent me a bundle of her letters to him, all written in a microscopic hand, more crabbed than his own became in later life, when it resembled nothing more than the tracks of a fly escaping from an inkpot. I have dozens of letters of his which to this day are partly undeciphered. Not only was Miss Mitford's writing small and angular, but after filling all sides of the sheet with the closest lines, she economized further by running postscripts edgewise all along the margins and even on the flaps of the envelopes.

Miss Mitford's advice, by the way, is as good for any literary aspirant now as it was for Payn when it was given, sixty or seventy years ago, and it was reëchoed long afterward, in verification of her wisdom, by his own

words: "There is no pursuit so doubtful, so full of risks, so subject to despondency, so open to despair itself. Oh, my young friend, with 'a turn for literature,' think twice or thrice before committing yourself to it, or you may bitterly repent, to find yourself where that 'turn' may take you! The literary calling is an exceptional one, and even at the best you will have trials and troubles of which you dream not, and to which no other calling is exposed."

Through her he made literary acquaintances. She introduced him to Harriet Martineau, and Harriet Martineau, in turn, introduced him (among others) to De Quincey. At luncheon with De Quincey, he was asked what wine he would take, and he was about to pour out a glass of what looked like port from a decanter near him, when the "opium-eater's" daughter whispered, "Not that." *That* was laudanum, and Payn saw De Quincey himself drink glass after glass of it.

My guess at his appearance before our first meeting proved to be wide of the mark. The door of the cab that met me at the station was opened by one who had all the marks of a scholarly country parson or a schoolmaster — a pale, studious, almost ascetic face, with thin side-whiskers, spectacled eyes, and a quiet, entreating sort of manner. And his clothes were in keeping with the rest — a jacket suit of rough black woollen cloth, topped by a wide-brimmed, soft felt clerical hat. His appearance, however, was deceptive. He was neither ascetic nor bookish, and his pallor came from the ill-health that even then had settled upon him in the form of gout and deafness. His spirits were invincible. He made light of his sufferings, as, for instance, when, speaking of his deafness, he said that while it shut out some pleasant

sounds, it also protected him from many bores. He loved a good story, and had many good stories to tell. It was almost impossible to bring up any subject that he would not discuss with whimsical humour, and his point of view, always original and independent, was untrammelled by any sense of deference to the opinion of the majority.

One day the three of us drove over to Canterbury, and with much persuasion Sir John and I induced him to go with us to the cathedral. While the verger showed us the sights, and we became absorbed in them, Payn dragged behind. We stood at the foot of the steps worn deep by the pilgrims to Becket's shrine. He was sighing with fatigue and heedless of the verger's reproving eye. Then we heard him whisper, "How I'd like to sit on a tomb and smoke a pipe!"

After the visit to Folkestone I was seldom in London, during the rest of his life, without seeing him, either at his home in Warrington Crescent, with his devoted wife and girls — one of whom married Mr. Buckle, the editor of the *Times* — or at his office in Waterloo Place. He was then editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, and his room was more like a pleasant study than a place of business. A fire glowed in the grate even on warm days, and in the afternoons the fragrance of tea sometimes mingled with that of tobacco. He lived by the clock. His forenoons were given to editorial work; then came luncheon at the Reform Club, and an invariable game of whist — the same players, day after day, year in, year out; another hour or so at the office, and a cab to Warrington Crescent.

One day an unannounced caller, who had managed to evade the porter down stairs, opened Payn's door. His hair was long, and his clothes were shabby and untidy.

He had a roll of papers in his hand. Payn, surmising a poet and an epic several thousand lines long, looked up. "Well, sir?"

"I've brought you something about sarcoma and carcinoma."

"We are overcrowded with poetry — couldn't accept another line, not if it were by Milton."

"Poetry!" the caller flashed. "Do you know anything about sarcoma and carcinoma?"

"Italian lovers, aren't they?" said Payn imperturbably.

The caller retreated, with a withering glance at the editor. Under the same roof as the *Cornhill* was the office of a medical and surgical journal, and it was this that the caller had sought for the disposal of a treatise on those cancerous growths with the euphonious names which, with a layman's ignorance, Payn ascribed to poetry. Payn was always playful, but it is not for me to cross-examine his stories, and others will lose rather than gain by insisting on proof.

XVI

WILKIE COLLINS, SIR WALTER BESANT, AND IAN MACLAREN

AGAIN in memory I call at Gloucester Place to see Wilkie Collins in his little house, a cheerful, rotund, business-like man of a height disproportionate to his ample girth. Already advanced in years, he had the briskness of middle age, and the freshness of youth in his complexion. His luxuriant beard was like spun silver, and had he worn a long mediæval cloak and peered out of it below its cowl, he would have made the traditional Faust as that character appears before Mephistopheles transforms him. Notwithstanding his matter-of-fact speech with its occasional cockneyisms of phrase and pronunciation; notwithstanding his well-tailored and modern apparel, as modish as that of any city man; there was a suggestion of the pictorial necromancer about him, which grew as one listened to him, and instead of the prints, of which he was a connoisseur, against the walls, one almost expected to find the apparatus of an alchemist.

He spoke of having visions and extraordinary dreams, not with any apprehension of mental disorder, nor as revealing anything abnormal, but without visible consciousness of the bewilderment he was producing in the listener. I suppose that as he proceeded he must have seen the question in my face, for as he turned to show me a valuable print he had picked up at half a

crown in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, and described with excellent mimicry the transaction between himself and the old woman who sold it, he offered me a brief explanation, "Coffee. I drink too much of it."

He was writing for us a few stories based on circumstantial evidence, and he frankly exhibited to me the books of remarkable trials which he was using as material. Let not any literary aspirant in the imitative age think from this that he can do the same thing; that old trials in sheepskin volumes will relieve him of the labour of invention and imagination; that ready-made plots are to be bought in Chancery Lane or the Strand at a few shillings apiece. Stevenson's "sedulous ape" is a part often played in the vanity of youth, but it leads to sad eye-openings. Unskilled and inexperienced hands may boil all the ingredients of an epicurean broth without being able to extract from them the savour of the cook's secret, incommunicable by formula. The trials are accessible to all, but all attempts to transmute them, as Wilkie Collins did, into little dramas enacted by human beings in natural surroundings, are sure to be futile, and the discouraged novice will learn that what seems so easy depends after all on the possession and exercise of that creative imagination which the books do not supply.

I also met Sir Walter Besant occasionally; an ardent, brisk, neat little man of fresh complexion, who puffed and panted about the world at high pressure and with wonderful vigour, spending himself, his money, and his enthusiasm in the two causes which obsessed him — the interests of the author as against those of the publisher, and the Atlantic Union, that hospitable society which he founded to bring about a better understanding and

attachment between people of the mother-country and those of the colonies and of America, not through politics or printed propaganda, but through social and intellectual intercourse. The kindness of the English members of that society to visitors coming without any personal introduction is expressed in many ways. The dons of Oxford and Cambridge give teas and show their antiquities and the sacred nooks of their colleges; bishops and deans open the doors of their palaces and houses and serve as vergers in exhibiting their abbeys and cathedrals; the owners of historic mansions suspend their rules and allow invasions of their memory-haunted quietude, and the Royal Courts of Justice and the Houses of Parliament grant special privileges. But far as the hospitality goes, it stops short of the open-hearted, open-handed intimacy and unreserve that Besant dreamed of. Could he have had his way hotels and lodging houses must have gone out of business. Each American as he landed at Liverpool, Southampton, or Plymouth would have been met at the foot of the gang-plank by an English kinsman (related by marriage — Adam and Eve — as Charles Mathews used to say), who would at once invite him to his home to stay as long as he pleased as a guest of honour and bosom friend. Dukes and earls were not to be excluded as hosts from this (for the American) fascinating project of entertainment, nor were humbler people, like those of the law, the church and his own profession to be considered unworthy ministrants in the stupendous and prolonged love-feast, which would heal all old sores, expunge the slanders of American history, and prove to the visitor that the Englishman, despite preconceived and hostile opinions of him was, after all, a pretty good sort of fellow.

Such was Besant's vision, and he talked of it with a rising temperature and excitedly — talked by the hour, talked till he glowed, talked till he was breathless, forgetting that both he and his listeners had other things to think of and to do, and that instead of milk and honey all the listeners could see was an iridescent mirage of pools and palms where actually lay the inhospitable desert of thirsty and shadeless sands.

Detached from the phantoms and deflated he came to earth a bustling man, sure-footed and astute enough, shrewd but strong in principle, exacting but fair and aggressive in enthusiasms.

I must throw away a taking title for a play, a novel, or a series of articles, in speaking of John Watson (Ian Maclaren), the author of "The Bonnie Brier Bush," "Kate Carnegie," and other stories of Scottish life. I would call him "The Man Who Looked Like Himself." I believe that the people to whom it would apply are few, and that those of ability, genius, and individuality differ extraordinarily from what one infers of them. Let a man be much above the average, and within as without, he is inscrutable and inexplicable.

To this John Watson was an exception. He "looked like himself." There could be no mistake about him. His qualities were all visible in his person. I should say that his predominant trait was a phenomenal transparency of character which was never afraid or ashamed of itself.

As he appeared he was, one of the sanest and most normal of men, essentially wholesome and reasonable, utterly unaffected and without vagaries; neither subtle nor eccentric, but of the kind whose conduct in any given circumstances could be predicted to accord with

the sober judgment of the wisest of his fellow men. I do not imply by this complaisance of character or the conscious or unconscious plasticity which, out of sheer amiability or politic adjustability, follows the line of least resistance. He could be angry, disputatious, and stubborn — Highland blood was in his veins — but never unfair, irrational, or bigoted. The impression he made was of physical and intellectual equipoise; of a sound constitution, carefully preserved, and of an outlook that contemplated and measured spiritual perfection in its relation to human limitations and deserts. Health glowed in him; he was great at golf, great in stature, clear-skinned and keen-eyed, a big, vigorous, rugged man, with a plain, earnest face in which seriousness and humour interplayed. His voice was rather strident, and rose like the skirl of his native bag-pipes, but his talk was fascinating; he made the listeners laugh without laughing himself. In the quietest way he dramatized any trifling incident that amused him.

Once, when I was lunching with him at his house in Liverpool and he was preparing to resign from the Sefton Park Church, he speculated as to how he might be estimated after his departure. In an instant the table and those around it vanished, and we were listening to two elders with whispering voices discussing a retiring minister.

"A good man, a verra good man," one of them was saying.

"Ay, he was that. There'll be nobody to deny it. But awm thinking — weel, no, I'll no say it."

"Awm thinking the same masel'. Was he no a bit off in his sermons lately, did ye say?"

"Weel, perhaps."

"And no so keen as he used to be."

"Puir man!"

"Ay, he did his best, nae doot."

"Ye minded him in the Sabbath school? Strange, verra strange hoo the attendance dropped. I canna account for it. What'll you be thinking?"

"I've heard creeticism, ay, severe creeticism; no that I agree with it, or disagree with it. Mackenzie was telling me we'll be lucky to be rid of him, and Campbell that he was ruining the kirk."

"Ay, and Ferguson was saying — but I'll no speak ill of him."

"Puir man!"

"Awm thinking it's for the best he will be going."

"Maybe. The new man's fine — another John Knox, Mackenzie was saying."

One could hear their undertones, as they damned with faint praise and condemned by innuendo; one saw them in their decent blacks, askance, timorous, insinuating. I wish I could repeat the dialogue in the Scot's vernacular, as Watson spoke it, with a humorous, familiar mastery that Robert Louis Stevenson himself could not excel: no other dialect is so vividly expressive, so irresistible in appeal. His features hardly moved, nor had he recourse to gestures. He did not act the little scene, but seemed to visualize it to us by hypnotic suggestion as he sat there and conjured us into it.

In the same way he described a "heresy hunt" of the kind that shakes Scotland to its foundations. He described the stir it makes in the silence of the hills and the recesses of moor and lochs. Every tongue in the land is loosened by it; the taciturn break their habit and become voluble. Two shepherds in adjoining pas-

tures who have been estranged for years in sullen enmity draw together once more to argue it; and in less than a fortnight the Duke of Argyll — not the present duke, but his father — "is out with a pamphlet." The late duke, a tireless controversialist, was always out with pamphlets, and that detail in this case, as inevitable as rain at all seasons and heatherbloom in autumn, was indispensable to the picture, which no elaboration or expansion could have made more complete.

Afterward, in his library, we talked of men, women, books, and theatres. His views were generous, his tastes catholic. Learned as he was in theology, he did not despise the lighter pleasures and interests of the world. He could enjoy a glass of wine, a big cigar, a new novel.

"I am not boasting or exaggerating," he said, "but I can usually get all I want out of a novel in three hours. I have been reading one, however, to which I have given three weeks, and I am going to read it again. Guess which it is."

I had been enchanted by Hewlett's "Richard Yea and Nay," and offered it as a solution.

"Pretty close, but not it. It is 'The Queen's Quair'," he replied, naming Hewlett's later story, which has Mary Queen of Scots as the principal figure.

"I don't take as authentic Hewlett's interpretation of her, but it is amazingly ingenious and daring, a satisfying picture to the imagination, though not historically true."

Modest he was, and yet hypersensitive to any reflection on the fidelity of his own drawing of Scottish character. I ventured to say that in my opinion his pictures of life in Drumtochty were too idyllic, and that they would have been stronger if he had not excluded the grimmer strain which, without being as prevalent as

in "The House with the Green Shutters," does not hide itself in the people themselves. He would not have it so; he was out of his chair at once, storming me with instances to the contrary. It was plain that he took himself for a realist, he who in these amiable little stories milked the cow of human kindness until it tottered.

When he was in New York on a preaching and lecturing tour, I invited him to luncheon at one of the gayest uptown restaurants. I, and David A. Munro, who had been a classmate of his at Edinburgh University, called for him at the old Everett House, and he came down stairs to go with us in a fancy tweed suit and a scarlet scarf. I suppose there was not another man in the city that day who looked so little like a cleric as he did.

We boarded a car and put him into the only vacant seat, while we, case-hardened, hung by straps and bent over him, laughing and talking. We were absorbed in ourselves until the shrillest voice I ever heard said: "If you want to lean on anybody, lean on your friend. Ain't he big enough?" Unconscious of transgression, we were shocked, and stared into one another's faces. The voice was that of an untidy, waspish woman seated next to Watson. "Did you speak to us?" I asked, abashed.

It repeated the remonstrance even more sharply: "If you want to lean on anybody, lean on your big friend here."

I or Munro had unconsciously touched her chaste and poignant knees. She sniffed at our profuse and humble apologies, as we meekly straightened ourselves, and we had not recovered from our shame and mortification when she, arrived at her destination, flounced out of the car, withering us with a final poisoned arrow from her eye.

Watson's face filled with amazement. "I couldn't have believed it," he panted. "Why, I have always supposed the Americans to be the politest people in the world"; and over his cigar after luncheon he gave us an instance to justify that opinion.

"As I was coming over in the *Teutonic*, I sat down in the library one afternoon, when the ship was rolling and pitching a good deal, to write some letters. Almost immediately a diffident-looking young man dropped into a chair by the desk, and fixed his eyes on me. An hour or more passed, and he was still there, returning my occasional and discouraging glances at him with a foolish, ingratiating smile. I was inclined to be annoyed. I had a suspicion that he was a reader of my books, perhaps an admirer — God only knows why I have admirers — or an autograph-hunter. He could wait. They are always with us, like the poor. But at last he rose, swept the air with the cap in his hand, and spoke:

"'Excuse me, Doctor Watson; I'm real sorry to disturb you, but I thought you'd like to know that just as soon as you left her, Mrs. Watson fell down the companion, way stairs, and I guess she hurt herself pretty badly. The surgeon's with her now.'

"After I had found out that she was only a little bruised, and had time to reflect on that young man's conduct, it seemed so considerate, sympathetic, and delicate, that I said to myself only an American could have been capable of it. Never mind that drop of vinegar. Americans are the politest people in the world."

His thoughts were not envisaged, and whether he was quite in earnest or slyly sarcastic, the reader may decide for himself. His face was enigmatical.

XVII

FIELD MARSHAL LORD WOLSELEY

WHEN I met him twenty-three years ago, Lord Wolseley was the hero of the hour in England. He had gathered laurels everywhere—in India, the Crimea, China, and Egypt. Where others had failed he had succeeded, and in the rapture of its appreciation the public exalted him as "England's only general." His promotion had been rapid. Three years after intering the army he had risen to be captain, and six years after that lieutenant-colonel. In the first eight years of his service he had been continuously in the field, always at war, always at the front. A peerage had been conferred on him; the field-marshal's baton had become more than a vision or a symbol of prophecy. Much had he seen and suffered much, like Ulysses. His escapes had been as miraculous as his victories had been brilliant. Buttons had been shot off his coat and seams out of his collar; bullets had knocked the cap off his head and grazed his skull without fulfilling their mission. Not that he was scathless. A deep, purplish furrow crossed his left cheek, and close observation discovered an artificial substitute for his right eye.

"Over and over again I ought to have been ended, and perhaps I was indecent in refusing to die when others in similar circumstances always did so," he said.

As an evidence of what the British Army had been in

his youth, he told me how his first engagement was fought in Burma.

"I was at Rangoon at the time, and the news arrived there of the rout of a company commanded by Captain Lock. Every soldier who could be spared was to go up the river, push through the jungle and punish his enemy. Two hundred of the Eightieth Regiment went under command of Sir John Cheape. We fought for nineteen days, until at last we worked our way up to the final position one afternoon and began making arrangements for attacking the next morning. At daybreak, when the fog cleared, I was sent with four men to a certain point to skirmish. I had never been drilled! My four men, or rather boys, had neither been drilled nor had even fired off a musket!"

The boys were killed almost at once; Wolseley himself pushed forward and fell into a pit dug by the enemy, and just missed being impaled on a spike they had erected in it. When he lifted himself out he was so dazed that he crawled into the enemy's lines, and perceiving his mistake, had to dash back under their fire. Again advancing with a fresh support he saw his fellow officers drop dead, and soon afterward he himself was shot through the leg.

"Go on," he cried to the men who, were lingering over him; "Go on!" and soon after that the enemy bolted.

His own unpreparedness and the inefficiency of the young soldiers were not the only evidence of the almost unbelievable incapacity of the war office and the admiralty of those days. He had sailed for China with part of his regiment from Portsmouth in a notoriously unseaworthy troop-ship called the *Transit*, and she had got no farther than Hurst Castle in the Solent, almost within sight of

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LORD WOLSELEY

At Fir Grove House, Farnham, Surrey, in 1888

her port of departure, when heaving to for fog she sank with the receding tide on her own anchor and made a hole in her bottom. The pumps were started, but the water gained, and the captain turned back for Portsmouth.

Lord Wolseley grimaced as he told the story. "As a precaution against dangerous explosions near the dockyards, from time immemorial the positive rule at Portsmouth has been that no ship shall enter the harbour until she has discharged all her powder at Spithead into lighters provided for that purpose. All that the *Transit* had on board was already well under water, for the leak was in the magazine. No danger from the mixture of powder and water was therefore possible, but there was the order signed by 'my lords' of the admiralty, and the captain did not dare to infringe it.

"He could not anchor, for his steam pumps only worked in connection with the engines which drove the screw, so, if the ship stopped, the pumps would stop also, and she would have sunk in a few minutes.

"I can never forget the absurdity of the position," he continued. "One of her majesty's ships, crowded with soldiers and half-full of water, in a sinking condition, steaming at full speed in a circle at Spithead, whilst the naval authorities were striving to decipher the signals of distress displayed at our mast-head. At last the signals were made out by those on shore, and formal permission was given for us to enter the harbour.

"After a great deal of manœuvring we came alongside a dockyard pier. To it we were lashed with chains and stout hawsers, to prevent the ship from moving, whilst the screw turned at full speed, its movement being, as I have said, a necessary accompaniment of the steam

pumps, whose action was necessary to keep the ship afloat."

She was patched up, but while she was crossing the Bay of Biscay she was obliged to put into Corunna for more repairs. As often as the wind blew strong she leaked again, and during a cyclone in the Indian Ocean she threatened to founder. All hands, sailors and soldiers, officers and men, were kept at the pumps for several days with little sleep and less food. Then the weather moderated, but her misfortunes were not ended. Steaming through the Strait of Banca to Singapore she struck a spike of coral reef, and stayed there till she sank forever. The crew and the troops were landed by the boats on an adjacent island, and when they were rescued the ships that brought relief also brought news of the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny and orders to proceed to Calcutta instead of China.

What happened to him there is a matter of history, a thrilling chapter, written by others than himself. If he refers to it at all his own part in it is disguised or slighted, and his manner is that of a detached recorder of the events described rather than that of a participant in them. His evasions reminded me of another general, who at a club I belong to was urged after dinner to tell us how he won his Victoria Cross. He hummed and hawed, backed and filled, meandered for an hour or more, provoked our interest, hovered over the point, balked at it, and furtively came back to it only to shirk it again. "How'ver — how'ver. What does it matter? Ah — er, I was shot through both arms.

"He, the beggar — how'ver, what does it matter? What does it matter?" As he sat down he coughed and blushed like a school girl, leaving the supreme moment of

the adventure for our future discovery through other sources.

Lord Wolseley does not hum and haw. There is no embarrassment or trepidation in his manner; he is composed and perspicuous, but if he approached it he never arrived at the revelation of his own exploits. Historical he might be, but not autobiographical. All I drew out of him about the relief of Lucknow was an incident that occurred on the way there.

"About forty miles from Cawnpore is the station of Futteepore. Upon reaching it we received orders from General Havelock, in front, to halt there for the present. This was, of course, very disheartening to men who had marched, I may say night and day, to get to Cawnpore in time to join the column there being collected for the relief of Lucknow. The first thing we did upon reaching Futteepore was to search for the remains of the gentleman who had been commissioner of the district, and who had been murdered there.

"He had been well known to all the natives in the region as a good and just man, devoted to their interests and to their welfare. He was religious, and had erected on the main road a stone tablet with the Lord's Prayer engraved on it in three languages.

"When the news of the mutiny at Cawnpore had reached his station, all the Englishmen there but he had gone back to Allahabad. He would not budge, as he stoutly maintained the natives would not molest him. He was wrong; they attacked him in his house, to the flat top of which he retreated, and there he sold his life, killing, as the natives told us, thirteen mutineers before he ceased to breathe.

"We found his skull, and collected as many of his bones

as we could. The only coffin we could obtain was an empty brandy case, in which we buried him with military honours. The sole inscription upon the box that contained his bones was 'Old Cognac'."

The scar on Lord Wolseley's left cheek had to be accounted for. All he would say of it was "in the trenches before Sevastopol," as he switched readily enough to less personal incidents of that memorable campaign. He visualized the scene: the bleak hills, gray under snow and sleet and rain; the drenched and half-starved troops hiding from the Russian batteries; the bursting of shells and the whistling of rifle balls among them.

"I remember," he said, "some curious things. I was sitting some few yards in the rear of our first parallel, alongside Captain Stanton, who was giving me instructions for the coming night. Two sergeants stood together facing us, listening to the orders which I wrote in my pocketbook. Whilst so occupied in what we conceived to be a very safe spot, down tumbled both the sergeants in front of us, as a shell rushed past so close that we felt its wind. One man's head had disappeared, and the other's face was horribly mangled; what we supposed to be his jawbone obtruded from a ghastly wound.

"The next morning I inquired in camp how the man was, and learned he had not been touched by the shell, but that his terrible wound had been made by the jawbone of the other sergeant, which was driven into his face. Indeed, a little reflection ought to have told us that no man could be seriously wounded in the head by the blow of a shell and still live."

The hospital was full, and many a sick and wounded man had to be turned back to the slush and mud of the trenches for a bed. Wolseley himself was thrice

wounded, once dangerously. He and two sappers were filling a breach when a round shot scattered the loose stones with such force that while one of the men was beheaded the other was disembowelled. Wolseley also fell, smothered in blood. He was supposed to be dead, and it was one of the wounds he received then that split his cheek open and cost him an eye.

It was in 1888, when he was adjutant-general of the army, that he asked me to spend a few days with him at the country house he had taken at Farnham — that pleasant little Surrey town where William Cobbett was born in the "Jolly Farmer," and where at Moor Park, Swift, serving as secretary to Sir William Temple, became entangled with Stella, and where the Bishop of Winchester has his seat.

We went down from Waterloo on one of those June days in which the English climate repents its sulks and takes on the quality of Paradise under a sky of the purest blue, holding Alps of fleecy, silvery, slow-moving clouds which diffuse the light and soften the landscape till it seems to be not of earth at all, but a heavenly mirage, exquisitely intangible.

The carriage that met us at the station swept with us, my wife and me, into the flowery and secluded grounds of Fir Grove House. Lord Wolseley, with his wife and daughter, were in another part of the garden, to which we were led by the butler through one of those airy, fragrant English sitting rooms, its tables laden with flowers and its French windows reaching to the level of the velvet lawn, and there we found him with one arm linked in that of the elder lady, and the other in that of the younger, vivaciously humming a tune and kicking his heels with all the liveliness of my old friend Grossmith

in the part of the major-general in Gilbert and Sullivan's nonsensical play. I had caught him quite unawares in the bosom of his family, and unhampered by the least formality or consciousness of observation. A trying situation, hazardous to dignity, upsetting to decorum, it might have been, but instead of that it made our reception facile through our mutual appreciation of the humour of it. Strangeness and the hesitating preliminaries of introduction were cancelled by the little surprise. We were established by that first peal of laughter.

In Lady Wolseley we saw a very handsome woman with a strong resemblance to the Empress Eugènie, and a high-born manner of much sweetness and grace. Frances, the only child, who will become a peeress in her own right, was but a wholesome slip of a girl with a passion for horsemanship and gardening, and since then she has made gardening the vocation of her life. Lord Wolseley himself was spruce, dapper, *debonair;* a man of the world as well as a soldier; alert but composed; dressed in the latest fashion — that morning in a gray lounge suit and a Homburg hat; not unconventional, nor, on the other hand, impeded by the inflexibilities of unreasonable usages or tradition; a man of various interests and strong opinions, constant in friendship, and, one could safely infer, resolute in opposition.

One could not have asked for a blither companion, and he made our visit a round of delight. His knowledge of books and authors seemed encyclopædic. When he took us through Moor Park I was convinced that he knew every word Swift had ever written, and every word written about him.

Moor Park was the retreat of Sir William Temple when, after the death of his son in 1686, he withdrew from pub-

lic life. He died here in 1699; and near the east end of his house is the sundial under which, according to his own request, his heart was buried in a silver box, "in the garden where he used to contemplate the works of nature with his beloved sister, the Lady Giffard." There were, however, other inmates of Moor Park, "to whom," writes Macaulay, " a far higher interest belongs. An eccentric, uncouth, disagreeable young Irishman, who had narrowly escaped plucking at Dublin, attended Sir William as amanuensis, for board and twenty pounds a year; dined at the second table, wrote bad verse in praise of his employer, and made love to a very pretty dark-eyed young girl who waited on Lady Giffard. Little did Temple imagine that the coarse exterior of his dependent concealed a genius equally suited to politics and to letters; a genius destined to shake great kingdoms, to stir the laughter and the rage of millions, and to leave to posterity memorials which can perish only with the English language. Little did he think that the flirtations in his servants' hall, which he perhaps scarcely deigned to make the subject of a jest, was the beginning of a long, unprosperous love, which was to be as widely famed as the passion of Petrarch or of Abelard. Sir William's secretary was Jonathan Swift; Lady Giffard's waiting maid was poor Stella."

With him (Lord Wolseley) literature was more than a recreation, and every day, generous as he was with his time, he shut himself for some hours in his library to advance that standard "Life of John Churchill," the famous Duke of Marlborough, upon which he was then engaged. He was one of those enviable persons who can do almost without sleep. You could part with him late at night, yet find him up with the dawn before the rest of the

household had stirred. One night he went to London to dine with Lord Randolph Churchill, and as there was no train to Farnham at the hour of his return, he chose to alight at Aldershot, and to walk thence home, a distance of twelve miles or more, long after midnight.

"Couldn't you have had a carriage?" Lady Wolseley demanded in the morning.

"Yes, my dear, but I wanted the exercise."

"You might have met footpads," she protested.

"Lucky for them that I didn't," he laughed, throwing himself into a sparring posture which gave assurance of as good a defence as ever brought down the curtain on a three-to-one encounter in a melodrama. Despite the sapping of all those wounds of his, he at fifty-five stood like a man whose vigour had never met with drains.

He had suffered much during his career from the maladministration of the war office, and once he exclaimed impatiently: "Statesmen! They are vestrymen. One good soldier is worth more than a score of the best of them." He it was who, to his everlasting sorrow, and through no fault of his own, failed to reach "Chinese" Gordon in time to save him at Khartoum. Gordon was a close friend of his, and had started on that last expedition from Wolseley's house in London. "Have you any money in your pocket?" Wolseley asked at the last moment, knowing well how in his exaltation Gordon lost sight of trifles of that kind. He could not keep money; it was no sooner in his hands than he gave it to the first object of charity that claimed it. Gordon confessed that he had not thought of money, and Wolseley raised among fellow officers a purse of several hundred pounds for him. Gordon kept it till he reached Port

Said, when a needy sheik to whom he was very much attached wheedled it out of him.

Wolseley preserves the last two letters ever received from Gordon, one saying, "Khartoum all right. Can hold forever," and the other, "Khartoum all right. 14.12.84." He could not hide his emotion; his eyes glistened as he spoke of him.

Gorden was not the only one of whom he spoke with enthusiasm. One day we had at luncheon Colonel Maurice (now general), son of the great preacher invoked by Tennyson in the familiar lines: "Come, Maurice, come —

> "Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
> I watch the twilight falling brown
> All round a careless order'd garden
> Close to the ridge of a noble down.
>
> "You'll have no scandal while you dine,
> But honest talk and wholesome wine,
> And only hear the magpie gossip,
> Garrulous under a roof of pine."

A tall, slender, handsome man, suave and modest, Colonel Maurice was so absorbed in relating what he had seen at some recent naval manœuvres that dish after dish passed him untouched. "You are not eating a thing, Maurice," Wolseley anxiously protested, and then, leaning over to me, he whispered, "Isn't he splendid? And as brave as a lion!" Maurice, too, had been in the trenches before Sevastopol.

There were many literary people among the guests, but we missed Henry James, who was another of the host's intimates.

His tenancy of Fir Grove House, at Farnham, was coming to an end. The queen had just made him Ranger

of Greenwich Park, a position which has privileges without any exhausting responsibilities. Ranger's Lodge was built by Anne of Denmark, Queen of James I, and enlarged by Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I. Later on it became the residence of the Earl of Chesterfield, who wrote those letters to his son which Johnson said inculcated the manners of a dancing master and the morals of a courtesan. Chesterfield himself was described as a wit among lords and a lord among wits.

"She's the dearest old lady, the queen!" exclaimed Lord Wolseley, speaking of her majesty's gift. "She's always thinking that a fellow's hard up."

I suppose that in any modern appraisement he would be put down as old-fashioned and undemocratic, notwithstanding his courtesy and affability to those he meets. "When I was a child," he said, "it was impressed upon me that a long line of forefathers was something to be proud of, and placed me under an obligation never to be forgotten — that ancient lineage conferred great benefits upon one, and required one to be all the more careful of one's character and one's mode of dealing with others. This had a very strong influence on my thoughts and aspirations. Born in Ireland, but of an English family, I had an intense love of England and a desire to serve her. That I should join the army was natural, for that was the profession of my father, grandfather, and forefathers for many generations. I always gloried in being a soldier; the very hardships of a soldier's life in the field had a charm for me; the thought of it fired my blood. Another thing that underlay and influenced all my early career was an intense belief in God — in an active God who took the greatest interest in my welfare, and who would, I was sure, grant those things

that were for my eternal good. I was taught to rely on His mercy at all times. I do not take the accident of birth nearly so seriously now; but, after all, a well-born man is fortunate in having through his ancestors an incentive to an honourable life."

Perhaps this record gives the illusion, through the tense into which I have fallen, of one who has passed, but Lord Wolseley, in his seventy-seventh year, is still alive. I caught a glimpse of him not many months ago at Hampton Court, where he occupies a wing of the palace, which, facing the silver ribbon of the Thames, has in its rear the Arcadian gardens with their matchless glades of chestnut, beech, and linden. He came forth as jauntily as ever, and Lady Wolseley, who was with him, unbent in figure, animated in manner, made a picture of youth prolonged, its beauty changed but still preserved.

XVIII

TWO FAMOUS WAR CORRESPONDENTS

I USED to see Archibald Forbes at the apartment which, before his second marriage, he occupied in Mandeville Mansions, Mandeville Place. He was very voluble and very naïve; he poured out his experiences and his ideas with a boyish confidence. It was not an irritating egotism by any means; on the contrary, it made one a participant in the exhilaration which the achievements recounted fully justified. A man sometimes glorifies himself in secret and frets his soul out in doing so; Forbes flung his chronicles out triumphantly, and much as you might wonder and admire, he, like Ulysses, wondered and admired more. What if he boasted, he who had done so much to boast about? As we listened to him, interest pinned us to his story, and it was only afterward in review, when we were cool and at a distance, that we could cavil. His egotism was too young and too compelling to make any effort to dissemble or stultify itself, and it acquired the charm of honesty, and simplicity.

"Sit down! Sit down! You'll have a glass of sherry, or port?"

The decanters and glasses were produced, and he helped himself before he launched into his discourse, which so enthralled him that he failed to remember he had not helped the visitor until two hours later he showed him to the door.

He was a splendid fellow to look upon; martial in bearing; spare of flesh, broad at the shoulders; narrow in the hips; round-headed; clean-shaven, save for a crisp moustache, and clear-eyed — a soldier in every feature. Physically he would have been equal to the part of Blackmore's John Ridd. But in the Mandeville Mansion days he was broken in health from exposure and over-exertion, though in one of the rooms he still kept a variety of kits suitable and ready for any sudden call to the field that might come to him.

I asked him what he thought were the essentials of his profession.

"There is only one thing for a new man to do," said he, "or for any man, and that is to go at once to the front and to place himself where the danger is the greatest and the fire is the hottest, and to help the wounded as much as possible. It is wonderful how quickly the way a correspondent has behaved is reported through the army; and if he shows courage he is at once ingratiated with the officers and men; while if he is timid and thinks more of his carcass than his newspaper, he is despised and every obstacle against getting news is put in his way."

Then I asked him as to his feeling, under fire. "I always have a desire to make myself as small as possible, and in order to keep my thoughts off the danger I write my despatches in full on the field, not making mere notes to be revised and elaborated afterward, but thinking out the most appropriate words and putting them together with as much literary finish as I am capable of. In a retreat, especially, when you hear shells coming after you, without seeing them, this desire to dwarf one's self or to hide in any hole, increases."

As to his "narrowest escape" he wrote to me: "All

narrow escapes are sudden and abrupt, and have neither frontispiece nor tail-piece. It is a spasm and over with it for the time. On the Shipka Pass I was being shot at without intermission for one whole day, it is true; but when throughout that period could one put one's finger on the actual moment of narrowest escape throughout a day that was all narrowest escape and yet monotonous for want of any relief? I have cited you the most telling instances I can remember, of a close call lasting far longer than a momentary period, and accompanied by full and alert consciousness of every feature of the incident as it developed, until unconsciousness supervened."

His letters like his talk were succinct, and as a specimen I give one in reference to an article I proposed to him on "Lincoln as a Strategist."

1 Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park, N. W., 22nd March, 1892.

DEAR MR. RIDEING:

Until within a few days ago, ever since my return from America, I have been in bed. I was seriously ailing before I left home; the double voyage quite broke me down, and my recovery has been very slow. I am writing this letter, as I have done the enclosed article, half reclining in an arm-chair, with a blotting pad instead of a rest.

I must put myself on your sense of the fitness of things, and beg of you to give me the elbow room of a second article. It is a tough subject to treat properly. It would be easy enough to cull from the rebellion records, specimens of Lincoln's strategic reasonings and recommendations to his generals in the field. But those disconnected pieces would have no intelligibility to the masses. Typical pieces of an illustrative character must be selected and their significance elucidated by an explanation of the situation which at the time surrounded them, and of the alternatives resulting from disregard of them. In the article now sent I have taken four important strategic deliverances by Lincoln, all of which, had they been fulfilled, would have produced great results. You will readily recognize that the postulate of Lincoln having been a strategist, does not in the slightest degree lean on the accomplishment or the reverse of his strategic conceptions. His strategy was not, it is true, theoretic; it was eminently practical indeed; but he

in his position could not enforce its performance. Moltke through the telegraph wire could do this from his desk in the general staff in Berlin, because he was virtually the head of the army in his position as the chief of staff, and the leaders in the field, away down among the Bohemian Mountains had to obey him. But Lincoln was a civilian and his titular position as commander-in-chief did not warrant him in issuing the professional soldier's commands for specific action. All he could do was to write to them letters of strategical advice.

I have about halved the field of his strategical manifestations in the accompanying article. There is no strategy in his letters to McClellan in the Peninsula, and a second article would deal with his strategic letters to McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, Meade, and Rosecranz subsequent to Antietam and finishing on Grant's accession to the full command. No word of strategy did Lincoln ever write to Grant or to any of the men who fought under Grant. Specimens of the letters of this period, from autumn 1862 to early spring 1864, could easily be dealt with in articles of equal length with the one I send you. You will readily understand that I am not asking for permission to write a second article because I am greedy for the *honourarium*. But I have the writer's legitimate pride in making a good and creditably finished job of a subject which I sincerely believe will be found of great interest by American readers, and which also may add to my reputation, and certainly to my acceptation among my American friends, who will like that a foreign writer should have so familiarized himself with the history of their great war, and has found a new laurel wherewith to deck the memory of the great President.

I have written of McClellan as I honestly think of him. Certainly not so strongly, by a great deal, as have Nicolay and Hay. Nevertheless I am in your hands, and if you think that I have been too strong, you will find that I have marked within pencil brackets a passage extending from last line of page twenty to the tenth line of page twenty-one, which you can excise if you think proper.

Assuming that you will accede to my anxious request for a second article, it ought certainly to follow immediately on the first. I write more slowly than I used to do, and the consultation of many references in an arm-chair is very tedious. Therefore I ought to be at work on No. 2 as soon as may be. If you agree that it is to be done I will ask you at early convenience to squander a dollar on the following cable:

"Maclis, London.
Forbes. Yes."

That will reach me and start me.

Very sincerely yours,
ARCH'D FORBES.

Another letter refers to the importance of organization in a war correspondent's campaign.

1 Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park, N. W., January 4, 1894.

DEAR MR. RIDEING:

As Millet* can tell you, the mere writing of war letters and war telegrams is by no means the "be-all-and-end-all" of the war correspondent's work. That is indeed a mere item. It is obvious that a man does not do much good, however well and copiously he writes, if he has no means of getting his written or wired matter onto his editor's desk. The accomplishment of this, by dint of *a priori* organization, by sedulous arrangement, by constant watchfulness, and by frequent, severe, and prolonged personal exertion — that is the real material and effective triumph of the war correspondent. And it is of that species of mechanism, that careful planning, that assiduous forethought, that I propose to make the theme of the article which I shall have pleasure in sending to you. You will find that the subject will not want for adventure and interest. I consider that in the Russo-Turkish war I went far to make something like a real science of the prompt forwarding of war correspondence.

Yours very truly,

ARCH'D FORBES.

All this had been impressed on him since his earliest experiences as a correspondent in the Franco-German war, when, utterly unprepared, he was commissioned by the *Morning Advertiser*. That was both a pathetic and an inspiring story. Folly and extravagance, he admitted, had ingloriously ended his university career, and after that he had taken the queen's shilling and enlisted in the royal Dragoons, from which he had been discharged when he started, with inadequate capital, the *London Scotsman*, writing the whole of it, news, editorials, and fiction, and taking on his own shoulders also the business of publishing it without earning from it more than bread and butter.

*F. D Millet, A. R. A. the versatile genius, who writes as well as he paints, and whose valour and intelligence as a special correspondent in battlefields evoked the enthusiasm of Forbes.

Then it was that James Grant, another Scot who edited the *Advertiser*, despatched him without credentials and with only twenty pounds in his pocket to see what he could of the war. He chose the German camp, and by a lucky chance received the "great headquarters pass," which gave him as many privileges as were allowed. He could not afford horses, mounts and remounts, which nearly all the other correspondents had. He covered the ground afoot with a knapsack on his back; ate gypsy-fashion under the lee of hedges and slept anywhere. He had no money to send couriers back to the bases with his despatches, or even for telegrams and no influence at headquarters through which his letters could be hastened to their destinations.

"I have often thought since," he said, "had all the appliances been then at my command, such as in later campaigns, I originated, elaborated, and strained many a time to their utmost tension, how I might have made the world ring in those early, eager, feverish days of the first act of the Franco-German tragedy!"

Does that sound like braggadocia? It is a characteristic utterance, but it is not vainglorious. He did "make the world ring" by his exploits whenever his hands were untied.

Through no fault of his the despatches he sent by mail were belated or lost *en route* to London, and a letter from Grant recalling him was on its way to him, but not received, when he was approached by the head of the staff of the *Times*, William Howard Russell, with a proposal that he should transfer his services to that paper.

"It was with a pang that I was forced to tell him that not even for such promotion could I desert the colours under which I had taken service, futile in the way of

making a name for myself as I had come to realize that service to be."

Grant's letter of dismissal reached him, and he struggled back to London penniless, weary and disheartened. Meanwhile, however, he had in his pockets unreported news of great importance, which on his arrival he offered to the *Advertiser*, feeling that he was in honour bound to do so. Grant coldly and curtly refused it. Then he carried it to the *Times*, and sent a card by the door-keeper to the editor, writing on it, "Left German front before Paris three days ago, possessed of exclusive information as to dispositions for beleaguerment." He was not even invited into the editor's office, and the only reply was a message by the door-keeper that if he chose to submit an article "in the usual way," it would be considered.

Humiliated and disappointed again, he took it to the *Daily News*, and after a gruff reception by the acting editor, was asked to expand it into three columns to be paid for at the rate of five guineas a column — an enormous sum to him in those days of poverty.

"I wrote like a whirlwind then, and I found that the faster I wrote the better I wrote," he said. "The picture grew on the canvas. I had that glow and sense of power which comes to a man when he knows that he is doing good work. The space allowed to me would not hold half my picture. I took it incomplete to the editor — three columns written in three hours, and begged him to give me more space."

The acting editor glanced at it and said, "Very good. We'll take as much of this kind of stuff as you can write."

"At five guineas a column?"

"Yes."

Forbes filled his pipe, and was happy.

Then the editor himself who had been absent on a holiday came back, and Forbes told him of the offer his associate had made. It was John Robinson (not then knighted) to whom I have referred in my reminiscences of James Payn. Robinson was of those who armour themselves against impositions on their own kindness by an affectation of severity. To Forbes's amazement he said, "I think not," and seemed to repudiate the arrangement for further contributions.

Forbes could not keep his temper and, having expressed his opinion of the *Daily News* with the utmost frankness, strode out of the door and downstairs. He heard a call, " Come back! Come back!" but flung over his shoulder a retort of three words, which had Robinson heeded, it would, as he laughingly declared afterward, have relieved that gentlemen of the necessity of ordering coal for the rest of his days.

Robinson followed him and caught him before he had turned the corner of Bouverie Street. "Come back, man, and don't be a fool. I don't want articles written in Fleet Street. I want you in the field — to start for Metz to-night."

And in the evening of that day Forbes, with unlimited funds at his disposal, left Charing Cross as the accredited correspondent of the *News*, to win for that paper and himself a preëminence due to its liberality and that rare combination in him which united valour, physical endurance, military knowledge, and military prescience with an extraordinary power of fluent and graphic literary expression.

He was too opinionated and too outspoken not to make some enemies, but none could impugn his loyalty to his employers, his veracity, his executive abilities,

or that phenomenal steadiness of nerve which enabled him, while ankle-deep in blood and enveloped in smoke and splashing fire, to describe a battle as imperturbably and as smoothly as though it had been a garden party. Sometimes when the battle was done and the combatants recovering, he, fatigued as the rest, but oblivious of himself, was in the saddle dashing toward the nearest outlet, telegraphic, or postal, for his despatches. Little wonder that while still in middle life he broke down, a sacrifice to his own exacting and dauntless sense of duty.

How unlike him, except in courage, was "Billy Russell," or as he was more properly known to the public in his later days, Sir William Howard Russell, the friend of half or more than half of all the monarchs, diplomats, and warriors of the world!

Russell was an elegant little man, who in his later days seemed to me like a modern Major Pendennis, so faultlessly fashionable was he, so socially circumspect, so assured of his footing in high places, and, without hauteur, so conscious of his class. Something of a beau and something of a dandy, he had the appearance and manner of an old-fashioned courtier: the easy grace and blandness, the complaisance and the ductility of a more formal and grandiose age than this. An Irishman, given a chance, usually has the makings of a courtier in him, and beyond his natural qualifications of that sort Russell had the most engaging traits of his nationality outside of politics.

One could not have asked for a livelier companion. He had met everybody and been everywhere, serving the *Times* in nearly every campaign from Lucknow, at the time of the siege, till Egypt in 1883 — the Danish

war with Schleswig-Holstein, the Indian mutiny, the American Civil war and the Franco-German war.

His exploits were not as daring or as spectacular as those of Forbes, but his personality and reputation, together with the prestige of the *Times*, procured such opportunities and privileges for him as no other correspondent ever had. Although he was bitterly criticized afterward, the United States received him as something more than an ambassador: the statesmen at Washington and the commanders afloat and ashore made a sort of bosom friend of him and admitted him to their inmost secrets. I believe that of his varied experiences those of the Civil war interested him most, and when I was at the Garrick Club or his apartment in Victoria Street with him, other subjects were postponed to make room for his recollections of those stormy days.

He was actually present at meetings of President Lincoln and his cabinet, and was besought as to the attitude of England and international law when Lord Lyons, then the British minister to the United States, was not consulted.

And when he passed from the North to the South, Jefferson Davis and his adherents received him with no less friendliness and no less confidence. They were sure that England would be on their side, and they talked to him as if, instead of the representative of a newspaper, he had been England personified. His position became trying and even perilous to his honour, from the extent of the information given to him by both sides as to defences and plans, and it took all his presence of mind and sagacity to avoid under eager and constant questioning the betrayal of one camp to the other, which the slightest indiscretion would have led to.

Then came the route of the Northern forces at Bull Run, the ignominious features of which defeat he described so fully and so unsparingly in his letters that he barely escaped from mob violence. The government revoked his privileges, and, his occupation gone, he was obliged to return discredited to England. For many years afterward the name of "Bull Run Russell," used as a synonym of renegade and miscreant, was mentioned in the North only with derision and execration, but before his death, revisiting America, he found among other changes that history had adjusted its perspective of events and that time with softened judgment had included him in its amnesty.

He always had a high and warm regard for Irwin McDowell, the much-maligned general commanding the Federal army at Bull Run, and after the close of the war he met him by chance in Vienna.

"Strange, we should meet to-day, Russell."

"Why?"

"The anniversary of Bull Run. Had I won that battle I would have been one of the most popular men in the United States and you another. It's very much the other way with us now."

Russell told him that he still had a photograph of him at home. "And I suppose," said McDowell, "your friends ask who on earth is McDowell?"

Russell always had relays of friends at the Garrick and was often there. In his early days he had been the intimate of Thackeray, Dickens, Trollope, Reade, and Shirley Brooks. Thackeray provided him with letters to all his friends in America, including the fascinating "Sam" Ward, the wit and epicure of New York, whose name sprinkles the pages of the memoirs of his

contemporaries, native and foreign, and survives in the various delicious and incomparable drinks and dishes he invented which are placed before every visitor to that hospitable city.

The last time I saw him was at the Garrick. His gout tortured him, and he was worried about money matters. He had just discovered that a once trusted and confidential employé on the staff of the *Army and Navy Journal*, which he owned and edited, had been robbing him for many years, and he feared that his old age would be passed in comparative poverty. His friends came to the rescue, however, and his financial difficulties were overcome.

XIX

LADY ST. HELIER AND THOMAS HARDY

FORTUNATE were those who, visiting London, took with them a letter of introduction to Lady Jeune, who on her husband's elevation to the peerage became Lady St. Helier. The daughter of an ancient but impoverished Highland family, she had been brought up like a Spartan child in austerity and simplicity, with little foretaste or foresight of the ascendency which she was to achieve as much through her personality and natural gifts as through her aristocratic connections. She more than anybody else fused and liberalized London society, leading it out of the ruts of rank and class into a fellowship with art and letters, and surprising both elements by the results of her tact and magnetism. An introduction to her became a passport to many social privileges.

May I attempt a picture of her? — A girl in figure, simply dressed, and fresh as her own heather, with large and beautiful eyes, which might be likened to one of her native lochs in their changing moods, now full, cool, and placid, as in calm and shadow, then as a loch swept by wind and sun, luminous, shimmering and dancing with, in her case, a sort of mischievous and communicative humour. She brought dissimilar elements together, and, as by magic, turned them into affinities. Under her spell the shyest put off their reserve, and the lofty their aloofness. Nor was she merely a mistress of social arts.

It was her privilege to be admitted to conferences of the leaders of public opinion at which no other women were present. Her intellectual and politicial influence was as great as the charm which made her salon so brilliant.

One day she invited me to her house to lunch with the Princess Christian, King Edward's sister, who had become interested in a periodical with which I was connected. The house is closed except to those bidden to it, when royalty is present. The butler is careful to ask you at the door if you are "expected," and he must be sure that you are before he admits you. That is the rule. We were only four, the princess, Lady St. Helier, my wife, and I, and my apprehension of solemnity and constraint, excusable in strangers on presentation to so illustrious a personage (one need not discredit one's self in the least in confessing it), did not last beyond the crossing of the threshold. The princess was not at all distant or difficult in manner or conversation, but gracefully easy, and fluent, an example I should say of the ordinary Englishwoman of education, intelligence, good sense, and good taste. If she differed from that not always genial standard at all, it was in her utter freedom from hauteur or condescension. No one could have been simpler or less reserved, no one more inquiring, attentive, considerate, appealing. She talked chiefly of politics. The country was in the throes of a general election, and she balanced the probabilities and ingeniously reasoned them from a remarkable fulness of information. From time to time we could hear a newsboy passing in the street and piping his "extras," and in the middle of a discussion she excused herself and told the butler to get a copy for her. She buried herself in the sheet for a

moment, and shaking her head, turned to me — I infer that a Radical victory was recorded — asking with naïve apprehension in her eye, "Do you think the throne is in any danger?"

What could one reply to that? Even a deep-dyed Radical himself must have reassured her and declared that any throne of which she was one of the ornaments could not possibly be in any peril.

There, too, one met among scores of other brilliant women, Mrs. Cragie — "John Oliver Hobbs"— the American girl, an exquisite creature who for many seasons provided London with much of its wit. Her books may perish, but not her epigrams. Many of them are current, and already the people who quote them cannot remember their source and assign them to Sheridan, Disraeli, or Oscar Wilde. What could have been happier than the duchess, who divided the world into three classes, "Dears, poor dears, and persons?" or this: "There is no such thing as everybody — that is a newspaper vulgarism. One is either a somebody or a nobody — irrespective of rank or profession. The next best thing to a somebody is a nobody in a good set." There were so many of them that choice is embarrassed. She herself had no poor opinion of them. Whenever she was reminded of them she could laugh at them as though she had never heard them before.

One night she took me to see her comedy, "The Ambassadors" at St. James Theatre. She had surely seen it many times before, for the end of the run was at hand, and stale as it may have become to others it had not lost its freshness for her. It was like being with a delighted child at a play. Each sally, each slant of wit, pleased her as much as it did the audience, and her eyes sparkled

Photograph by the American Press Association.

THOMAS HARDY

into mine for the confirmation of merit, which would have been spontaneous even without her fascinating presence.

She was fascinating in many ways, girlish in spirit and in appearance; very slender, very dainty, very smart, and gowned like a princess. People fell in love with her and artists beseeched her to sit for them. There are several pictures of her in pastel, oil, and crayon, but to me she seemed to be one of those who in portraiture call for and justify the delicacy of the miniature. She had more than beauty and vivacity, however, and while we yielded to those we became aware of a character as ambitious and dauntless as a man's. Not a bit of a blue-stocking, externally a woman of the world of fashion, she was, with all her gayety and facility, a scholar, and as happy and competent in conversation with solemn intellectuals and seniors as with simpler people.

I remember a lovely Sunday in the Isle of Wight, where her father had a house to which she ran down from time to time during the season, especially for those charming English week-ends. In that house, as in her town house in Lancaster Gate, she was always surrounded by clever people. To keep an appointment in town she started back to London on the Sunday evening, radiant, and, so far as eye could see, in perfect health. The next morning, as I sat in the sunny garden on a ledge between the violet sea and the rim of the cliffs, a crying woman creeping toward me shocked me with the news that when called an hour or so earlier Pearl Cragie had been found dead in bed at Lancaster Gate, with peace in her face, and a crucifix clasped to her bosom.

It was also through Lady Jeune that I became acquainted with Sir Henry Thompson, the physician of

kings, and, in the way of avocation, a painter of very good pictures, which hung in the Royal Academy. He was a small, courtly, handsome man, with face so infantile in its purity of complexion, that the frame of gray hair made it almost abnormal. A rigorous dietician, he habitually carried gluten and other ingredients of health food with him wherever he went. His books, which have a wide circulation, explain his theories, but the theories were only for those who wanted them. The dinners he gave — they contributed hardly less to his celebrity than his pictures and professional skill — were epicurean. He called them "octaves" from the fixed number of the people who sat down to them, never more or less than eight, and they included nearly everybody of distinction in literature, science, art, and politics during nearly forty years. They began with Dickens, Browning, and Thackeray among the guests; King Edward as Prince of Wales came to four, and they were all given in the same room with the same table and chairs during the entire series. At that to which I was bidden, Joseph Chamberlain and Thomas Hardy were present and placed next to each other, and I wondered what topic two men so dissimilar could find for conversation.

The most astute of politicians, with little concern for literature and a merely casual knowledge of it, on one hand, and on the other hand the shyest of authors to whom politics were remote and uninspiring: They seemed to get along very well, and when an opportunity came I asked Hardy what they had talked about. Had Chamberlain confided the secrets of the cabinet to him, or had Hardy, breaking his habit of reserve, disclosed

to the rather saturnine wearer of the orchid and the monocle, the evolution of another Tess or Jude?

Hardy smiled: "We did talk, didn't we? It was all about — what do you suppose? Genealogy. The genealogy of the Endicotts of Dorset, who are the ancestors of Mrs. Chamberlain, who was an Endicott of Salem, Massachusetts."

I had a suspicion that he, as well as I, had expected to be engaged by a greater interest than that, but Mr. Chamberlain was usually pragmatic, and never revealed if he had it, the charm of social adaptivity and plasticity.

When Hardy came to town from Wessex he often made Lady Jeune's his home, and the fewer the company the more at ease he became. Low-voiced, abstracted and ever self-effacing, he might have been taken for a mild, timid, and unsophisticated cleric; he was the last person one would have hit on in a crowd as the author of those novels which take possession of us and make us as intimate with their scenes and characters as his Marty South was with the boughs which, brushing her face in the dark lane, were recognized by her at once, each variety of invisible shrub and tree recording itself with a human touch through her intuition and long experience.

We went to see him at Dorchester one day, and varied the journey by coaching from Wool across the heath which he calls Egdon and which on the map is Bere. Down there time has little changed the face of the land, or the character of the people. As they were a century and more ago they are essentially now. Wool is the end of the branch line, and across the fields from the station is the gray old manor-house, where Tess and Angel Clare

ate supper on their wedding night. The empty stone coffin in which Tess reposed remains in the precincts of the ruined abbey. The neighbourhood reverberates traditions of the historical D'Urbervilles, from whom she descended, and the little church of Bere Regis (Kings Bere in the novel), with its grotesquely carved and painted roof, has many memorials of their ancient splendour. Hither came Bathsheba, of "Far from the Madding Crowd," to the fair, and within a league is Weatherbury Castle, the scene of Swithin St. Cleeve's distraction between love and the pursuit of astronomy. The awe of the heavens was never communicated with greater awe than in that novel — "Two on a Tower" — which unexpurgated, made its first appearance in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Thomas Bailey Aldrich was then the editor of that periodical, and I remember how he halted over the daring of the story. "I asked Hardy for a family story, and he has given me a story in the family way," he complained to me with a sigh that could have lifted a sea.

Then we came to other scenes of "Far From the Madding Crowd," and saw Gabriel Oak shepherding his lambs, and the covert where Sergeant Troy met Fanny Robin. Egdon is wild and sombre under its coat of wind-swept, ruffled gorse and heather, "an untamable Israelish king," as Hardy calls it, but it is less spacious and less austere to those who come freshly to it than it is in his description. I know of savager and bleaker moorland within thirty miles of Charing Cross.

Dorchester is the Casterbridge of the novels, a sleepy, unchanging place, where Roman wrecks overlay the still existing ruins of the aboriginals. A great amphitheatre is one sign of its antiquity, and not far from the

long high street, upon which so many of his creations have passed, we found the modest villa of brick and terra-cotta which he designed and built for himself after leaving Wimborne. Sentimentally, we might prefer and expect to see him in a moated grange, but his own choice was utilitarian, and he points with more pride to the true workmanship of carpenters, masons, and plumbers than to ornament. Relics of the Romans turn up as often as his garden is spaded, and where Cæsar's legions dwelt he abides in the spirit of Gray's "Elegy," and breathes the soothing air untempted by the turmoil of the town.

He warms up in congenial society, but his humour is like a thread of silver in a sombre tapestry. The impression he makes is that he is one of those who, in John Burroughs's haunting phrase, are "Unhoused from their comfortable anthropomorphic creeds and beginning to feel the cosmic chill." I took away with me from conversation at a dinner he gave me at the Savile Club the idea of a doomed universe with its population succumbing to the apathy of progressive and sterilizing melancholia.

Richard Whiteing of "No. 5 John Street" and Sir William Robertson Nicholl, theologian, essayist, and editor, were with us that day. Whiteing is a big, dark, tender, earnest man, whose success in fiction came to him, as to De Morgan, in middle life and after exhausting years of hard work in journalism. Nicholl is a wee Scotchman with a dreamy manner and a voice that seldom rises above a whisper. The manner cloaks a prodigy of versatility and industry. He is a preacher, a lecturer, a leader of the non-conformists, a voluminous author and the editor of I don't know how many dissimilar

periodicals, including the learned *Expositor* and the popular *British Weekly*. That night he was going home, late as our return was, to begin and finish before retiring, a new introduction to the works of Oliver Wendell Holmes. He brims with the quick, insinuating humour of his race. A newly created knight was also with us, and Nicholl, then unknighted himself, mischievously chaffed him on his promotion.

"Do you make them crawl?" he said in a way that pictured the obsequious bending the knee and dragging themselves across the floor. "If I were a knight I should make them crawl, aye, and though they begged I wouldn't speak to any of them for full six weeks."

XX

"TOBY, M. P." AND HIS CIRCLE

DOES the reader wish to see more celebrities, or to meet again those he has seen before? Let him go to the Lucys, a name that is spoken in London as though there were but two families of that name in the Kingdom, the Lucys of Charlecote, the scene of Shakespeare's poaching, and the Lucys of Ashley Gardens. The latter are the ones I refer to.

Most people are in one way or another, and often in many ways, like other people. Harry Lucy is like nobody else, except that in appearance he may recall Dickens's Tommy Traddles. He is one of the smallest of men, rubicund of complexion and crowned with a mop of tumultuous hair, white, surging and uncurbed as the crest of the sea, which knows no other combing than an occasional abstracted or distracted sweep of the fingers. He is an individual as rare and original as Mark Twain, of a pattern that nature in a fastidious mood evidently decided not to repeat, another instance of Byron's lines:

> Nature formed but one such man
> And broke the die in moulding Sheridan —

a variation of another line by Ariosto.

His humour is of the twinkling kind, like Aldrich's, and like that poet's, too, it is always catching you unpre-

pared. It is like a restless winged thing, a little tormenting but quite stingless. It comes at you round the corner, and if it disappears for a moment it returns and pricks you till you laugh in perceiving that nearly everything may be assuaged and righted by it. It has been *Punch's* best asset for many years, and I believe that the public men of England prefer a line or two of its amiable banter in the columns of that sheet, so far as mention of themselves go, to a whole column of editorial praise in the *Times*, or in any other paper.

However wearisome and splenetic the sittings of Parliament may be, his "essence" of the proceedings always discovers some saving and reconciling grace which heals animosities and revives patience, and without the "Member for Sark" (his imaginary constituency), the House of Commons would be as little like itself as it would be without the Speaker himself or the mace on the table. Probably no one else has so complete a knowledge of its procedure, usages, and traditions, and probably no one else is to the same extent *persona grata* with all the individuals of all parties and all the factions as "Toby, M. P.," "Harry," or, to give him his proper name and new title, Sir Henry W. Lucy.

A charming little lady is mated to him: a lady of infinite tact and friendliness, who is never apart from him and who participates in all he does, both work and play. When they are at sea she smilingly describes herself to her friends as "marine secretary," when in the country as "rural secretary."

They are much at home and constantly entertaining, yet you find them everywhere in society — at Marlborough House, at Windsor, when the King gives a

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SIR HENRY W. LUCY

garden party, at state balls, at every new play, at all the functions of the season. I am proud to have had them as friends for nearly thirty years.

For a time Lucy was editor-in-chief of the *Daily News* and used to gather at his table some of his colleagues, including Andrew Lang and Richard Whiteing. Lang ate, drank, and talked, never missing the thread of conversation, and wrote his article for the morrow's paper while the dinner progressed. The article was always a good one, moreover, and we, accustomed as we were to journalistic facility, looked upon the achievement as upon some feat by a magician which we could not explain. He never lets it be seen that he takes anything seriously. The world is a world of trifles for him, agreeable trifles or disagreeable trifles. Nothing is worth while except fishing or golf — London and all that goes on there a waste of time, to be laughed at or scorned. His attitude is one of mockery and disdain, not bitter but playful, and he makes a joke of even his own scholarship, and occasionally of the scholarship of others. Pooh! Pooh! *Qui bono?* Rubbish and rot! You listen to him wondering to what extent he is dissembling, and while you are pondering it your ears catch bits of slang like splashes of mud on fresh marble, and some one you hold in awe is spoken of as a "good-natured duffer" or as a "bloke." Then his speech returns to respectability without solemnity, and flows along in the pleasant way like a clear and sparkling river, now deep, now rippling in the shallows. Suddenly he pauses in the middle of a sentence, and astonishes you further by dropping his tall, loose, serpentine figure upon the floor to fondle the poodle or the cat, and stretched there continues the conversation from a position which, though it may sur-

prise the others, evokes no apology or remark from him.

Nothing matters with him. He becomes almost petulant if anything is spoken of as being difficult or imposing. "But why?" he repeats, and makes light of it.

He reminded me of a story which Gilbert Parker tells of Beerbohm Tree. When Tree was touring America in Parker's "Seats of the Mighty," the author took the actor to see Niagara Falls, and so arranged it that the first view should be as impressive as possible. He watched closely and eagerly, expecting an outburst of awe and rapture over the sublimity of the spectacle, and he was dumfounded when no emotion whatever appeared in Tree's face.

"Well?" said Parker.

"Well," said Tree, "*is that all?*"

"Is that all?" frequently says Mr. Lang when others are holding their breaths over something very unusual, either admirable or in some way startling. I came from the country one night to dine with him at his house in Marloes Road, Kensington, and when he found that I had turned my back on the peace and beauty of Box Hill for that purpose, he upbraided me for what he probably thought was the height of folly. Nevertheless, sitting between him and Edmund Gosse (they are very intimate and sympathetic) I had my reward in the interplay of wit, as full of sparkle and exhilaration as the wine. The scope of his knowledge is extraordinary, and he has the same facility that Sir Edwin Arnold had.

I was talking with Arnold one day as to subjects on which he might write for the *North American Review.*

"I am ashamed to say it, but I must," he sighed. "I

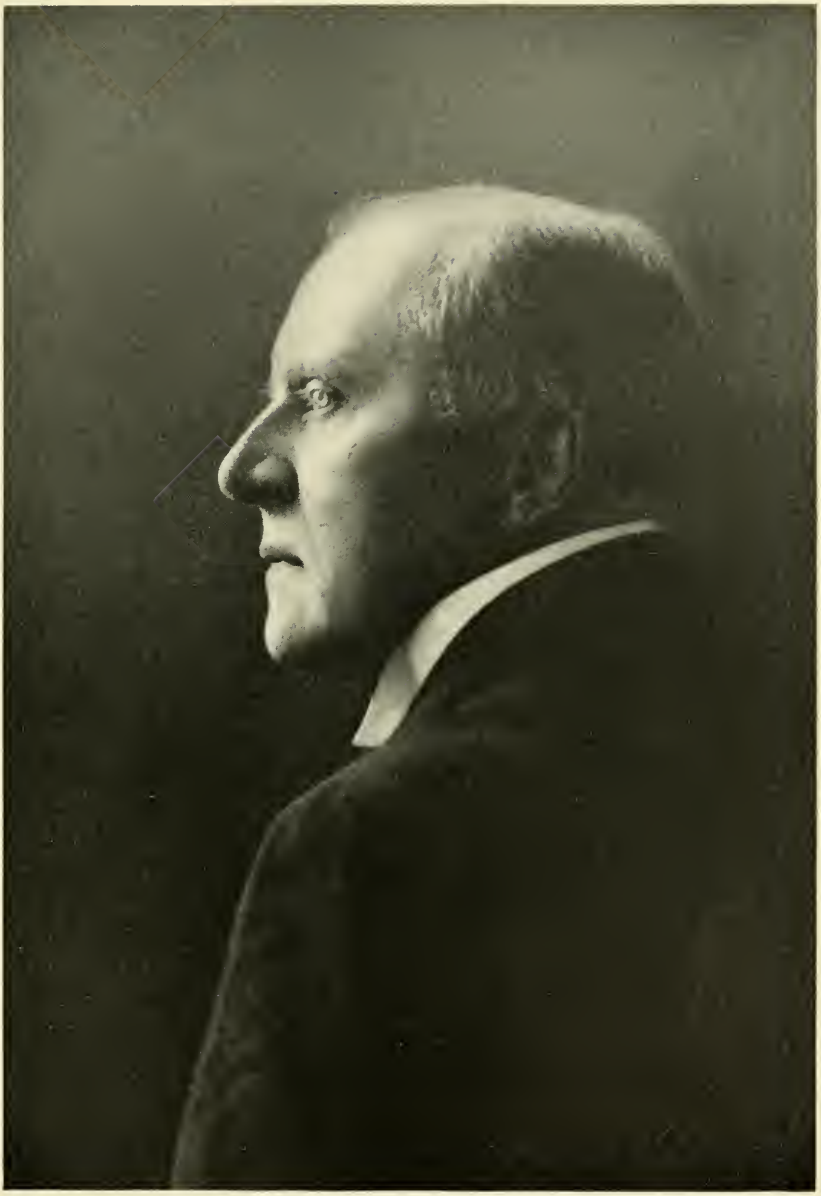
have been in journalism so long that I can write on any subject," with strong emphasis on the "any."

It was true. I gave him many subjects during my acquaintance with him, and he never failed, various and dissimilar as they were, to develop them into just the kind of article both editor and reader are eager for. He could not be dull. He had the true journalistic instinct and capacity for lucidity, colour, animation and condensation — the art (or perhaps some may choose to call it the trick) of sufficiency without redundancy, and the projection of the essential and most significant parts of his material over the abstract and recondite. Necessity swung the whip. He who had written "The Light of Asia" could not have submitted to the toil of the "handyman" of the press without some distaste and some sense of misapplication and waste. Not even at the last did fatigue appear in his work, but while it was carefully hidden there it was pathetically visible in him. Blindness cast its darkness upon him, and a son betrayed him and defaulted, yet up to the last, cheery and courtly as ever, his pretty and devoted little Japanese wife at his elbow, he dictated what he could not write without revealing the creeping shadow of his afflictions.

Lord chancellors and lord chief justices also came to the Lucys,' and I met Lord Russell of Killowen there as well as at his own house near the Jeunes' in Harley Street. He was quite unlike what one would have supposed him to be from his reputation at the bar. Though an Irishman, and the first Catholic lord chief justice, he looked like an English squire, and not a trace of the brogue lingered in his speech. A commanding figure, with a noble and mobile, clean-shaven face, and a clear, rosy complexion, he had a rural freshness about him, and when

he talked his interest in agriculture and sport confirmed the inference which assigned him to a place in the country. Ascot and the Derby, the chances of the horses and the betting on them, topics of that sort would quickly draw him out and lead him into stories of the efforts he had made and the sacrifices he had endured that he might be present at some race meeting at Chester, Newmarket, or Epsom. He would confide to you, if you showed the right sort of understanding and appreciation, how once he nearly owned a Derby winner and while he took a pinch from his snuff-box and you recovered your breath, he would look the words as plainly as if he had spoken them, "What do you say to that?" Then the theatre and plays: he was fond of them, but old-fashioned in his preferences. He knew and admired Irving, but had said to him, "You know, Irving, I like those things you used to do two hundred years ago much better than those you are doing now."

Yes, observing him without knowing him, a stranger could not have been blamed for want of perspicuity if he had assumed from glimpses of him in such moods that he was a conservative and benevolent but rather "sporty" country gentleman of more than average intelligence and education. That he, this apparently bland and ingenuous person, could be the lord chief justice of England, who as Charles Russell (later Sir Charles) had been the terror of those he opposed and who in the cases of Mrs. Maybrick and Charles Stewart Parnell, not to mention scores of others, had impressed the whole world by his skill in the most ingenious and relentless cross-examination which the stubbornest of falsehood and guilt quailed under and at last confessed to, was more than perplexing.



From a photograph by C. Vandyk, London

SIR HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE

I am speaking of him in his later years, when his age and his elevation to the lord chief justiceship had, of course, imposed more restraints upon him than were necessary in the combative advocate. As lord chief justice he bore himself with all the decorum and impartiality the office calls for; perhaps his composure cost him some effort, for he was naturally vehement, impatient, and more or less overbearing. Mellowed by age and unprovoked, however, he became on the surface at least almost benignant, and the volcanic explosions that had burst from him as a barrister were heard from him no more. Anybody would have thought him a philanthropic and confiding old gentleman, whose faith in human nature had never been disturbed. That was the impression he made on those who at the first glance did not identify him in the relaxation of social intercourse, though a fuller acquaintance was sure to reveal by and by something in his eye, a sort of probe or X-ray, which penetrated the object on which it was focussed with a perhaps startling comprehension of an unavailing reticence. He himself revealed nothing of the effect on him of what he discovered, nor connoted it except by another pinch of snuff. After all, the old Charles Russell was only sheathed and subordinated in the graver and more responsible lord chief justice, and he no doubt "spoke in silence" to himself with his old impatience of fraud, humbug, and hypocrisy. Strong men change less than weaker ones, and concealed but not abandoned were his old weapons of inquisition, analysis and denunciation.

In his early days at the bar his temper sometimes got the better of him, and on a memorable occasion he brought down on his head a rebuke from the court, presided over

by Justice Denman, who said that before the next day he would consider what he ought to do. On the following morning both bench and bar were in a state of excited anticipation, and Justice Denman, entering the court with more than ordinary solemnity, began the business of the day by saying, "Mr. Russell, in my condition of sorrow and resentment yesterday I could not trust myself to take the action which seemed imperative, but since the court adjourned last evening I have had the advantage of considering with my brother Judge the painful incident, and I——" Russell was instantly on his feet, and spreading his outstretched arms with an air of superb magnanimity and pacificatory desire, said: "Yes, my lord, and I beg that you will not say another word upon the subject, for I can honestly assure you that I have entirely and forever dismissed it from my memory" — a turning of the tables which evoked such a roar of laughter in the court that even Mr. Justice Denman and his associate had to join in it.

One night when I was dining with him at Harley Street, a girl from Cincinnati was among the guests, and for some reason or other not apparent she was very ill at ease. Perhaps it was the importance of the lord chief justice that agitated her, though it is not usual for an American girl to be flustered by the eminence of the people she meets. She, the ordinary girl, will air her ideas of science to a Tyndall, her philosophy to a Spencer, her poetry to a Tennyson or her political knowledge to a Gladstone without any consciousness of fatuity or impudence. When others sit and listen she, unabashed, will offer her own opinions with the assurace of an equal and with a staggering lack of diffidence. The girl from Cincinnati was not of that kind, however. She was more like one

of those English girls who are fast disappearing in the manumission of the sex in this age of the suffragette — those demure, tremulous, self-effacing creatures who blush when spoken to and whose only comment on whatever my be said to them is "Fancy!" The Cincinnati girl got little further than monosyllables, and stammered over even them. When Lord Russell himself spoke to her she sank as if on the verge of collapse. His manner was gentleness itself and his handsome face smiled. He spoke of his fondness for America and of New York, which he knew well.

"Yes, " she said laboriously. "New York is — fine."

"I think Fifth Avenue is the most magnificent thoroughfare in the world."

"Yes. The gardens round the houses are so beautiful, aren't they?"

It was ill-bred of me and unkind, I confess, but I could not contain myself. "Gardens round the houses in Fifth Avenue!" I exclaimed.

The hopeless look she gave me shamed me. His face did not show surprise; it was one of those faces that rarely mirror what is passing in the mind. After a moment's hesitation and beaming encouragement he replied: "The gardens in Fifth Avenue? Ah, yes, to be sure. I had almost forgotten the gardens." He pitied and ameliorated her plight as soon as he saw it. I assumed that she knew the street well enough, but that she was in such a nervous confusion, so like a person drowning, that her knowledge lapsed into illusion and her tongue wagged away from whatever intelligence she may have had when she was not distraught.

Could this be he, I asked myself again, of whose im-

periousness and explosiveness I had heard so many instances?

He reserved his sympathy for the weak and the wronged. The domineering side of his character came out not only in his encounters with crime, but also when he was offended by pretence and vulgarity. A Manchester solicitor, gold-chained, jewelled, and wearing a magnificent fur coat, came into his chambers one day.

"What do you mean by coming here in a coat like that? Take it off at once, sir," Russell cried savagely. Everybody present was dismayed, but as soon as the coat was removed he plunged into the case which the solicitor had brought as if nothing unusual had happened. When he was irritated he could use pretty strong language.

Also at the Lucys' I have met Mr. H. G. Wells, a very different person from what you would expect him to be from a mere reading knowledge of "Kipps," "Tono Bungay," "Mr. Polly," and "Ann Veronica," a smallish, demure, unobtrusive, low-voiced man, very particular as to his clothes, almost feminine in his fastidiousness. The open-eyed and eye-opening audacity of his novels and the originality and daring of his social and political theories could not possibly be surmised from what one sees of him in ordinary intercourse. He gives the impression of being a butterfly rather than the vigorous radical and intellectual force that he is, though you cannot fail to observe the humour of his mouth and eyes. I admire Mr. Wells for both the trenchant simplicity of his style, its ease and grace, its honesty, its unlaboured and tranquil movement — "Strong without rage; without o'erflowing full" — and for the profundity of his insight into human nature, and I predict that his works

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SIR HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE
As "Hamlet"

will long outlast those of most of his contemporaries in fiction.

Lest we deceive ourselves in narrow pharisaism and epicureanism as to the cleanliness of the world, he may occasionally drag us through its mire, perhaps repelling us by dipping his hand in it to prove its depth, but oftener he leads us to inspiring hill-tops and pantascopic views, where the air is pure and invigorating.

At the Lucys too you may sometimes find Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and his accomplished and diverting wife, Lady Tree, both of whom are celebrated for their wit. Whenever you go to London one of the first things you are likely to hear is a fresh epigram of hers or his. I have had the pleasure of knowing them for twenty years or more, and he is still something of a mystery to me through the multiplicity of his activities, which he steadily pursues while apparently he is enveloped in a cloud of dreams. "He has a way of appearing to be soaring in the clouds while he is rooted to earth. Only a witticism, an inanity, or a piece of chopped logic, is necessary to bring him down. He picks it up, plays with it, turns it round and about and upside down — and utters a drollery or pungent criticism upon it in swift, neat epigram. He is not farthest away when his eyes are dreaming — his hearing is tense and keen. This makes for the baffling thing in him. He never speaks except to say the illuminating something — he never babbles nothings. His absent-mindedness is the peg for many tales, as when he went to pay a call, he got to reading his letters in the hansom, stepped out when the cabby drew up at the door, rang the bell, still reading letters, and, on the servant opening the door, said, "Come in! come in!" walked down the

steps into the hansom and drove home again, still reading letters."

That is a fair description of him. A John-a-Dreams you think, as you see his eyes upturned while he rests his elbow on the table or the arms of his chair. He is more than a dual personality. The artistic temperament is paramount in him, and never content with less than the fullest measure of its aspirations, and yet he is the proprietor and manager as well as the leading actor of His Majesty's, which he has made the first theatre of the Empire, and that no more by the lavish splendour and accuracy of what it offers than by its intellectual and æsthetic appeal.

Joseph Jefferson used to tell us at The Players how on an imaginary visit to the gates of Heaven St. Peter did not recognize him.

"Jefferson, Joe Jefferson, you know."

The saint shook his head until Jefferson added "Rip Van Winkle."

"Ah!" The celestial custodian smiled a little. "I'll let you in, but see here! if I do you've got to change that part. We are getting a bit tired of it even up here."

Tree cannot be excluded from Paradise on that score — for want of novelty and variety. His variety is infinite, his ambition boundless. However marked and gratifying his success may be in one part he is no sooner familiar in it than he is impatient to add another to his amazingly versatile record, and from the classics he swings to the modern, from Shakespeare and Sheridan to Stephen Phillips, Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, and still more recent playwrights. Nor does he ever fail to command respect, for subtle intelligence and artistry ingrain all his impersonations. He is never less than interesting and often great.

His Hamlet is of all the most poetic and in that, as in "The Balladmonger," his own personality is visible, but in Falstaff, in old Demetrius of "The Red Lamp," and especially in the character of the swollen, blatant vulgarian of "Business is Business," every idiosyncrasy of his own completely disappears. Indeed, I think that the last is an incomparable example of his genius for self-effacement and transfiguration.

Another thing to his credit is the magnanimity of his attitude toward his fellow players which allows him to engage them without thought of peril to his own predominance. It is not uncommon for the star to take very good care that those who support him shall not do so too well. Tree's policy is generous, not only to the members of his company but through them to the public. He divides honour with those who surround him and even subordinates himself so that another part than his may have all the value and prominence the author intended. Too often jealousy disturbs or suspends the judgment of the bright, particular star. He is afraid of his satellites, and prefers them to be dim, not brilliant, not invaders of his orbit, visible only as foils to his effulgence. Tree, on the contrary, strives to surround himself with actors who can take every advantage of their opportunities, and no spectator is more pleased than he is when they justify his selection by running close to him in the approval of the audience. I have often seen him in his dressing-room, that laboratory of his miraculous transformations, at the end of the first nights, with a few friends around him, and while they have been pouring congratulation into his ears he has let the flattery pass in order to praise his associates.

"How fine you were, Tree. You surpassed yourself."

"Do you think so?" with a quizzical glance. "But wasn't A—— splendid! And B ——! When the King ogles her, and she drops her eyes and courtesies! I must tell her how good she was."

He is reckless of cost in his productions, yet he frankly declares that he does not want to produce any plays that the public will not pay to see.

"It is far better to read Shakespeare in the study than to see him presented in the archaic and echoic methods so dear to epicures in mediocrity. Either Shakespeare wrote for the stage or he did not. If for the stage, then it should be the sole aim of the theatre to create the illusion and the emotional intention of the poet in the most compelling way that is granted to it.

"The merely archaic presentation of the play can be of interest only to those who do not pay their shilling to enter the theatre. The art that appeals only to a coterie is on a lower plane than that which appeals to the world. The theatre is not for those who fulfil their souls in footnotes."

I could fill a chapter with further instances of his wit, but one more example of it must suffice. He was playing in Dublin to small audiences while another theatre was full to overflowing, the attraction there being a bouncing and voluptuous woman, who was more than generous in the display of her person.

"What's the use?" sighed Tree, "How can Art ever compete with Nature."

Speaking of "Toby, M. P." I am reminded of the Houses of Parliament, where for ten years or more I spent a good deal of my time, an experience that depended for its pleasure, like so many things in life, on the novelty of it. The proceedings themselves are often

of less interest than what one can see in the lobbies, in the dining-room and on the terrace. There may be no vacancy for one in the galleries, but any member can invite his friend to tea or dinner as often as he pleases, and those who are in the cabinet and the ministry have rooms of their own, up winding stairs and at the end of narrow, musty corridors, where they can entertain in privacy and without restrictions. A delightful feeling of mystery and exclusiveness envelops one in being among the chosen of those little, privileged companies, who, I am not ashamed to say, I sometimes turned to account in the editorial work I was doing.

"If you want to see anybody I'll send for him," William Woodall, who was then financial secretary to the war office, used to say, and he would provide a corner in which I could discuss with possible contributors the matters I had in hand, while he engaged his other guests, fellow members of the House and people of the world of literature and art,who had dined with him earlier, in a post-prandial way. It was easier for an editor to get celebrities of the political world to write for him then it is now. The misuse of their names and their material by sensational and unscrupulous periodicals has made them wary and suspicious of even the best.

But when Woodall sent his message the person sought, usually and most obligingly came, and the business was done off-hand, or if not quite off-hand, after a little haggling. The commercial spirit holds hard and fast in many places, and I never quarrel with it nor despise it when through it a man merely seeks the most he can get from sources amply qualified to provide it. I can recall how surprised the late Robert C. Winthrop of Boston was when he was told that Tennyson accepted pay

for his poems and Gladstone pay for his articles. The unsophisticated old gentleman thought they sacrificed their dignity and slighted the rights of humanity in doing so, but his point of view was that of the rich amateur, who in his abundance and leisure finds sufficient reward on his occasional excursions into books and magazines, through the accruing honour of what he flatters himself is a service to mankind. Tennyson drove hard bargains with his publishers, and I think it was I who awakened Mr. Gladstone to a sense of the commercial value of his articles. Mr. Gladstone had been satisfied with twenty or thirty guineas as a fee as often as he wrote for the English reviews. I was able to increase his *honorarium* to several times that amount, and thereby established a precedent to which henceforth he always adhered. After his first transaction with me a London editor pressed him for a contribution, and it came, but in the corner of the manuscript was pencilled, like the figures on a lawyer's brief, the inexorable price, one hundred guineas. The editor was stunned, and his review, one of great merit, did not long outlast the shock. I also had a curious experience with Tennyson. He wrote some verses for us, and as soon as he had received the very substantial sum agreed on, he wrote that we had better publish them without delay, "as otherwise they might leak out." That was an ingenious way of putting it, and I had some difficulty in convincing him that if they "leaked out" before they appeared in our columns they would have very little value for us.

I do not of course mean to say that Woodall, kind and influential as he was, summoned the Gladstones, the Motleys, and the Balfours of the House to his sanctum, but lesser though not undistinguished men answered

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SIR HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE
As "Falstaff"

his message by appearing, probably as a favour to him rather than as a concession to me. They were not lacking in business instinct. I have to smile now as I recall a dashing young fellow who was then at the beginning of his career, unaided by wealth or power, and with no other advantages than his talents. He was full of energy, but gasping after his run up the stairs. He listened to my proposal with rapid comprehension. "All right! All right! I'll do it — but not for twenty guineas. Make it thirty, and it's done." Since then that business-like young man has been raised to the peerage and has had the highest office in the gift of the crown.

This reminds me of a story the president of the Adams Express Company told me of Andrew Carnegie. Mr. Carnegie had confided to him that his first savings were invested in ten shares of that company's stock.

"And have you got those ten shares yet?" the president asked.

"No."

"Too bad! If you'd kept them you might have been a rich man now."

But I could not possibly say to Lord Curzon that if he had devoted himself to literature rather than to statesmanship he would be any better off than he is to-day.

XXI

THE AUTHOR OF "LORNA DOONE"

THE next time you are in London go down to the royal borough of Richmond, which is but nine miles away, and having seen the famous view from the Terrace, continue by the footpath down the hill under the Star and Garter to the village of Petersham, where, within ten miles of the babble and bustle of Charing Cross, you will find relics and some of the atmosphere of the eighteenth and earlier centuries.

On one hand gently curves the placid, sylvan river; on the other Petersham Park slopes down through dense, glossy woods of oak, beech, elm, and chestnut, and clumps of spruce, pine, and cedar of Lebanon, with thickets of rhododendrons between, to hawthorn-hedged meadows, pastures, and paddocks, which spread out from the front and back of comfortable Georgian houses whose weathered brick glows in every shade of red and purple.

Another footpath across a field, leads you to the ancient church built of the same warm brick, mottled with ivy and golden lichens — a mere toy in size, but much the oldest edifice in the village: it was founded at the beginning of the fourteenth century on the site of a cell of the Abbey of Chertsey. There you will be tempted to linger in the little churchyard where you may hear the cuckoo calling like spirit to spirit, and the moss-grown graves are mantled by flowers and sheltered by sombre sentinels of cypress and yew.

You may linger, you will linger, until you fall under a spell of peace and beauty which reconciles you to the inevitable change the hillocked earth betokens. Roses sprinkle the low wall over which you can see all the surrounding loveliness: the slant of the park, the quiet fields and gardens, the silver surface of the stream, and the crimson, brown, and white sails tacking upon it; roses are everywhere, dropping their petals on the paths, netting headstones and monuments, springing where the hearts have been of those who lie below.

In all England you will not happen on anything more characteristic of her rural charm than Petersham, which has been preserved like a piece of old lace or lengths of brocade bequeathed from grandmother to granddaughter for untold generations.

Some celebrities are buried here: Captain Vancouver, the discoverer of the island; Mary and Agnes Berry, the friends of Pope and Horace Walpole, and the Countess of Ailesbury — and one monument testifies to the hold the place takes on others than natives:

> Richard, Earl of Edgcumbe
> Lies buried here
> who during a greater portion of his life chose this neighbourhood
> for a residence, and dying at Richmond desired that his mortal
> remains should not be borne to the distant tomb of his ancestors,
> but be deposited in this churchyard

Mount Edgcumbe in Plymouth Sound has beauties of its own; its green hills dip into a peaceful bay; laurel, myrtle, orchids, magnolias, palmetto, and other tropical, and semi-tropical things thrive in its soft air, but the lord of it renounced it under the greater lure of this vale of peace on the fringe of London. If you have any sentiment you too will wish to live there when the time for retire-

ment comes, and see in the signs of death among the graves, wreathed in flowers as they are, sung to by skylarks and thrushes, and in the dark by nightingales, only the promise of repose.

Then, if you are good for another three miles, you can go by footpath up the wide, smooth river bank, overhung by ancient trees and hawthorn, and on the opposite side, bordered by luxuriant gardens, with more and more roses in bushes, arcades, and screens, looking as though deluges of them must have fallen out of the blue sky and the slow-moving, billowy clouds — you can go past Ham House, which Charles the First's Earl of Lauderdale built, and which his descendant, the Earl of Dysart, owns, to Twickenham Ferry and Teddington Lock without seeing in all your walk anything to mar the constant beauty, except here and there a tea house too reckless of colour, or an ill-advised villa, whose mistakes are nearly hidden by redeeming shrubbery and flowers.

That is a favourite walk of mine, and in the years that are gone it ended in Teddington at the door of R. D. Blackmore, the author of "Lorna Doone."

Away from the river Teddington is naught now but a raw, sprawling, untidy, hobbledehoy of a London suburb, but when Blackmore chose it for a home it was a country village, far from the noises and the smoke of town, and except for its tea gardens, as rural as anything between Hyde Park Corner and Bristol. He bought his land for its seclusion, and with no thought of what it would produce beyond fruits and vegetables. The only noise, and that infrequent, was from the occasional drags and *char-à-bancs* on their way with vocal cockney holiday-makers to and from Hampton Court and Bushey Park.

He did not reckon on the reach of the dragon's claws or the size of its maw. The railway soon came and cut off a corner of the land. In a few years more the adjacent meadows were filled with the red and yellow shops and houses of Suburbia, and glades where the nightingale had sung were stripped and plotted to make room for the ever-increasing examples of the unlovely mushroom architecture, which pressed to his very gates.

He could have sold to advantage, but he had come to stay, and stay he did till the end of his days, sending his fruits to Covent Garden, and his novels to Fleet Street or thereabout to make good the losses on the fruit. He paid for his hobby, in part at least, with his books, and in doing so did not feel that he was making a sacrifice of them or of his dignity. It was exceptionally fine fruit that filled the round wicker baskets of the familiar pattern which, bearing his name in big black letters, were trundled down to market along the level highway, orchard-bound, between Teddington and Brentford to meet at Busch Corner, where the Isleworth Road connects with the Hounslow Road, the similar produce of another novelist, a friend of his, and a dear old friend of mine, George Manville Fenn, who for a quarter of a century or more divided himself between the loom of fiction and a walled, old-world garden within the bounds of the Duke of Northumberland's Syon Park.

If testimony is wanted I am willing to affirm that better fruit than that of R. D. Blackmore and George Manville Fenn was never sent to market: nor ever had the brotherhood of gardeners more honest or more enthusiastic followers than they. What pleasant memories spring from the alleys and coverts of Fenn's garden, with masses of glowing flowers, its lawn and the pavil-

ion-like mulberry trees and weeping ashes that sheltered us in their cool and dappled shade at tea-time! The two men were not unlike in their tastes and temperaments. Both were tall, genial, and mild; both charmed by a sort of radiant simplicity.

There could not be a simpler or plainer house than Blackmore's. I believe it is yet to be seen from the tops of the trams that have "cityfied" Teddington more than the trains did — a house of dingy brick and slate without a dormer, or a gable, or a single ornament to relieve the austerity of its four wholly utilitarian walls, as improbable a domicile as one could think of for a man of romantic and poetical imagination. Within it was no more æsthetic than without, bare and cheerless, giving, however, an impression of indifference to ornament or a contempt for it rather than of enforced frugality.

We talked in his study, and that was a bit of a room with a writing-table, a chair or two, and a few books against the walls, books in the plainest bindings — for use, and, like all the rest of the furniture, not for display. A pallet served as both bed and sofa, and a whimsical impulse decided that before the various articles had been assembled each had been asked: "What good are you? Are you necessary, something that we can't possibly do without? If you are a superfluity you shall not stay. If you are a luxury, out you go. You have mistaken your destination." Nevertheless everything was airy, sweet, and spotless, and confirmed Richard Whiteing's dictum that the absence of superfluity may be a negative beauty.

As for the man himself he was very like Horace Greeley in appearance. He must have been some inches more than six feet in height in his youth, and he towered above ordinary men even when his shoulders

sagged, as they did in his closing years. His head was in proportion to his stature, and the sparse locks remaining had a sort of debonair friskiness that hinted at a vitality reduced a little, perhaps, but without a sign of the cloudy dregs of exhaustion, though he was well along in years. His beard, shaved away from his upper lip and chin, festooned a rosy face from ear to ear, a face of wholesome colour, pink and creamy as a girl's, and lighted by humorous, twinkling eyes of mingled shrewdness and kindness. Rusticity appeared in his loosely-fitting, ill-matched clothes, and an air of rusticity enveloped him: not the material rusticity of the farmyard, but that of the wind and the scents and the voices of the open spaces; that of one who, living afield, had become attuned to the quietude and solace of communion in noiseless and unprofaned places. He seemed to exhale the very essence of the moorlands and coombes he loved and interpreted so well. Low-voiced, mild, benign, and courteous, attached to old ways and conditions that are losing their hold, he was not passive or supine, but could take his stand solidly and inmovably enough when conduct or conversation antagonized his beliefs and principles. He was one of the sincerest of men, and if one had to sum him up in a word a fitter one than "wholesome" could not be chosen. You felt him as a piece of England and of England unmixed.

Is there ever a gardener, who, when you call on him, allows you to stay in his study, his drawing-room or elsewhere indoors for more than twenty minutes, if so long as that? You see him glancing at the sky through the windows: he may be wondering if it is too cold or damp for you, but if it is not tempestuous and the rain is not in drowning floods he is sure to say after a little

hesitation, "Wouldn't you like to come into the garden?" and to show his pleasure the moment you consent. And then he leads you forth, and strolls with you up and down the paths, a more contented man, listening to you and answering, and throwing in his own comments in leisurely tones, while every now and then he steps from your side to rake a hand among the strawberries, which in Teddington and Twickenham are famous for their size and flavour, or shakes his head at his peaches and the fruits clinging to and slowly ripening against the green and purple, moss-stained southern walls. He is not inattentive to the subject of conversation, nor does he miss the thread of it, but through it all he interjects irrelevant parentheses as to blight, the weather and marauding birds, in which you, unless you are a gardener yourself, may only feign an interest. The expression of his eyes claims sympathy, and you are ashamed of yourself in becoming a renegade to him in letting your feelings run with the predatory enemies as you see a few of them caught alive by the neck in the meshes of the nets and paying the penalty of their appetites, like so many unfeathered and better endowed living things.

So it was with Blackmore. He took you into his garden, and picking up shears and pruning knife, used them as you followed him and talked for choice more of his fruits than of himself or of his books, about which he was always very shy. Only one thing seemed sufficient to ruffle his abiding serenity, and that was some mistaken paragraph in a horticultural paper. Then he would shake the offending sheet in the wind, and cry out "Blockheads! Donkeys! This is the thickest-headed of all the thick-headed papers. Why the fellow doesn't

even know that the temperature of the soil has more to do with the start of life than the temperature of the air!" And he would cap his objurgation with a tip of Latin, for which he had a scholar's fondness.

With some reluctance on his part I got a few words in edgewise about "Lorna Doone," but he had grown tired of the predominance and preference given to that book by his admirers, many of them distant strangers in all parts of the world, from whom he was constantly hearing. Editors and publishers, I among them, besought him for variations of it or extensions of it, and under pressure and unwillingly he once revived the Doones in a brief narrative, which it is probable he afterward regretted. Beyond that he would not go.

I asked him about the origin of the story. "I could hardly tell" — with some attempts at memory — "whence and how I picked up the odds and ends, some of which came from my grandfather (rector of Oare), *circa* 1790, and later. I know not how early or how late, for he never lived there, but rode across the moors to give them a sermon every other Sunday. And when he became too old for that my uncle used to do it for him." He derided the frequent attempts to identify the scenes his imagination created with actual localities in the neighbourhood of Lynton.

I always thought there was a play in "Lorna Doone," and he authorized me, not without experience in such work, to dramatize it. I got as far as a scenario and consultations with actors and managers, but no farther. There was a difficulty which could not be overcome, and that was the size of John Ridd, the protagonist. Every-

thing hung on that — on colossal height, girth, and muscle in the impersonator. Prize-fighters and exhibition giants were thought of, but bulk and weight could not suffice without some refinement, intelligence, and histrionic capacity. The combination was unattainable: padding might have served for circumference, as it does in the part of Falstaff, but stilts would have been requisite to lift the tallest actor to Ridd's splendid and surpassing elevation. It need not be said that the actors themselves did not see it in this way; Shakespeare had no "rude mechanical" in his eye when he created Bottom but a common specimen of his fellow players, who in their own conceit can, as we all know, play any part that is long enough and central enough, whether it be the lion or Pyramus. One of them was confident he could do John Ridd, and ready to stake money on it — an effeminate little man with shrimpy figure, and a violin voice, which would have necessitated a megaphone in addition to the padding and the stilts. The play I contemplated was abandoned, and though unauthorized versions of the romance have been attempted they have not succeeded.

Occasional letters passed between us — his always written on the smallest and most lady-like of note-paper in a cramped but not illegible hand, which at a glance gave the impression of Chinese characters. They had an antique precision and formality and were embellished by pedantic bits of Latin, like his talk. Many words were abbreviated in the old-fashioned way, which economized the alphabet while it elaborated and meandered in the phrase. Then such words as "would," "should" and "which" were curtailed to "wd," "shd" and "wh." I think he belonged to the eighteenth century

by his preferences and his habits. He was proud of the port in the cellar: and loved God and honoured the queen; he read the *Times* and he regarded change and innovation as devices of the devil. Petersham Church-yard is the place in which he should have been buried.

XXII

MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH MR. GLADSTONE

EARLY in the eighties, when he lived in Harley Street, Mr. Gladstone often walked from his house to Westminster by the way of Regent Street and Pall Mall, and it was on one of these occasions — in the yellow dusk of a wintry afternoon — that I saw him for the first time. Even the few in the crowd who did not know him were arrested by the rare distinction of his appearance, which suggested both power and benevolence. Apparently in the prime of life, though actually beyond it, and with a figure of supple strength and more than common height — his face pallid but luminous — he bore himself with that dignity and grace which nobles and princes do not always inherit and the leaders of men cannot always acquire. There was in him "a combination and a form indeed to give the world assurance of a man." Other distinguished people might be mistaken for something less than they are — Lord Rosebery for instance — but it was impossible to see Mr. Gladstone, whether one knew him or not, without recognizing in him a man both unusual and paramount. Those among the passers who did not know him gazed and wondered; the others whispered his name, and many of them after passing him once turned in their path and doubled on it for the sake of passing him again.

Soon after this it was my privilege to become acquainted with him personally, and a frequent correspondence between us ensued, leading to occasional visits to Hawarden, which I need not say made red-letter days for me, and were looked forward to with no less appreciation than the memory of them justified when they were over.

Hawarden is not properly a castle, but a comparatively modern castellated mansion of yellowish-gray stone set in a formal garden, with loose gravel paths and gorgeous flower beds that glow like banners. A high stone wall separates the house and grounds from the village, but in the opposite direction they open upon a rolling and heavily timbered park and distant views of the Welsh hills. The path is always open to the public, but the garden and the approaches to the house are fenced off, as are the ruins of an ancient castle standing on a hill close by. That castle was one of the chain of fortresses built by Edward I and Edward II to overawe Wales, and nothing remains of it but the crumbling, moss-grown keep, from the parapet of which you can see the Dee crawling to the sea, and the low peninsula of Cheshire, and the darkened skies hanging over Liverpool.

When visitors came to Hawarden as guests of the house (and such visitors came from all over the world), the host would often take them up to the parapet, and as he gazed meditatively toward the brown cloud enveloping the bustling seaport which gave him birth, the mind of the spectator was drawn sympathetically down the long vista of years lying between the child in Rodney Street and the veteran standing by, who had so gallantly weathered the political storms of

more than sixty years. We all remember Macaulay's characterization of Gladstone, who at twenty-five had become an under-secretary of state — "the hope of the stern and unbending Tories." Never did a prediction so miscarry. "I was a Conservative in respect to ecclesiastical questions, but not in all things," he declared to me, "though I did not then understand the value of liberty for its own sake as a principle of human action and as a necessary condition of all political excellence." Before this he had created definitions of the Liberal and Conservative parties — "Liberalism is trust in the people, qualified by prudence; Conservatism is mistrust of the people, qualified by fear."

His urbanity had an old-world quality of courtliness without the chill of ceremoniousness, and the visitor was quickly made to feel that he was an object of friendly interest and consideration rather than the recipient of honours and privileges, ready as he properly might be to see himself only on that footing.

The life at Hawarden could not have been simpler than it was in Mr. Gladstone's closing years. The house is not one of the great ones — not a "show place" in the sense that Chatsworth, Hatfield, and Eaton Hall are, though it was so long the Mecca of British Radicals, who all through the summer thronged the park and spouted Liberal doctrines as copiously as their kettles spouted tea. "The absence of superfluity," Mr. Richard Whiteing says, "is negative beauty," and no superfluity was visible at Hawarden, except in the library, which from time to time overflowed into the new hostel for theological students, founded by Mr. Gladstone in the village.

"As long as I kept my books down to twenty thou-

sand I could remember them all, but now" — he touched with his foot a row of them that had been removed from the library of the house to the hostel — "but now, with thirty thousand and more, I find myself getting duplicates."

All things — all persons — in the household were governed by simplicity and precision — so many hours were allowed for work, and so many for play. To the end Mr. Gladstone lived by a time-table, and the days were rare when he made any variation from it. Immediately after lunchen he retired to his library for about an hour, not to work, read, or rest himself, but to humour Mrs. Gladstone while she took her nap, which she could not do when he was absent. The incident speaks for itself, and I mention it for the light it throws on the affection and mutual dependence visible at all times between them.

He was nearing his eighty-eighth year at the time of which I am writing, but even then it was his habit to rise by eight and not retire till eleven or later. Tree-chopping had been forbidden, and his recreations were limited to walks and drives in the afternoon and back-gammon (of which he was very fond) after dinner. Here I am using "recreation" in its conventional sense of amusement. Mr. Gladstone often declared that he had always been able to find recreation in its proper sense by turning from one kind of work to another — that when wearied of politics he could refresh himself by literature, and *vice versa*. He attributed his longevity and health to this versatility, by which he could recuperate his energies, not by suspending them, but by merely diverting them. More remarkable than that, however, was the gift which enabled him to shut out for the night,

at least, all cares of the day, even in the great political crises when the fate of nations depended on his decision. When the day's work was done — and it might be a very long and anxious day — he never carried any remnants of it to bed with him, but drew about him an impenetrable curtain, behind which repose prepared him and fortified him for to-morrow. I believe the ability to compel sleep whenever it was due or desired never failed him.

He was extraordinarily methodical in his work and correspondence, and looked after many details which might well have been delegated to a private secretary. Hundreds of letters from strangers were withheld from him, but he kept matters which were of interest and importance to him in his own hands. All the letters and all the manuscripts — not a few — which I received from him from 1887 to 1898 were holographic — not excepting the post-cards, which he liked for their economy of space, time, and material, using them with an edge of black specially printed on the margin by his own order when he was in mourning. He strongly objected to typewriting on the ground that not only was it more difficult for him to read than any fair hand, but also because it interposed, as he claimed, a mechanical veil between the sender and the receiver of a letter. His amazing precision revealed itself even in matters that another man in a similar position would have slighted. The little that could be crowded on to the face of a post-card was often divided into sections "I.," "II.," "III.," and then subdivided by A, B, C, and so on.

I have a note from him before me in which he says: "Your letter of May 12th has aroused in me a sense of guilt and stirred me to the performance of my duty. My

excuse is not only in the heavy pressure of other calls; it is also in this, that my eyes are steadily losing power, and that typewriting (so kindly meant) tries them much more than good manuscript."

I have another letter of his which covers four closely written pages, and is divided like others into sections and sub-sections by numerals and alphabetical distinctions. In this, written soon after President Cleveland's Venezuelan message, he says: "In my view it was impossible for us to admit that the United States had a *locus standi* in the case; and, as I understand, with its usual perspicacity, your government does not press this point if the question be properly handled; *i.e.*, referred to arbitration. On the other hand, if Lord Salisbury insisted on the acknowledgment of the Schomburg line as a preliminary, he was wrong and gravely wrong. Unless that line has been acknowledged by Venezuela, it is of no authority whatever as against her. What claims may arise in our favour out of silence, uses, prescription, and the like, an arbitrator would consider."

It was through Mr. Gladstone that I was introduced to Cardinal Manning, whom I sought as a contributor to a discussion of Christianity, which Mr. Gladstone and Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll were already carrying on in the pages of the *North American Review*. The cardinal was to review both of them, and sum up and adjudicate in the controversy. I was invited to the gloomy palace at Westminster to meet him, and as much to my surprise as to my satisfaction, he appeared to like the idea as I explained it to him and to be even eager to add his word to what had already been said. I particularly wondered how he would deal with the violent heresies of "the colonel," and what he would have to say of his life-long

friend as defender of the faith. His view of them was what I desired.

A few days later I was again bidden to the palace and the cardinal glided — was wafted, one might say — into the bare, high-ceiled room, lined with the dusty portraits of dead hierarchs, looking less like a man than a spirit in his emaciation. His tread was noiseless, his eyes glowed like stars under his smooth, white brow, and his fingers were long, pointed, and as sensitive as a woman's. Could this ever have been the youth at Harrow who sported Hessian boots with tassels, and was described as a "buck of the first water?" Ascetic as his appearance was, reminding one of mediæval saints (and perhaps inquisitions), his manner had a human warmth and friendly ease. He had with him a large folio manuscript, written from beginning to end in his own legible and beautiful hand, with scarcely an erasure or an interlineation in it.

"There — there it is," he said, beaming as he handed the manuscript to me. "I have given you something better than what you asked for. I have not said a word about Mr. Gladstone!"

I am afraid my countenance fell, for what I had been after was to some extent the *argumentum ad hominem* — something personal as well as controversial.

"And not a word about Mr. Ingersoll," he continued with a triumphant air, looking for signs of gratification which may have been dissembled in my face if they did not exist.

"I have not referred to them, nor to what they have said. On the contrary I have let the Church speak for itself. Here it is," and he handed me a dogmatic essay under the head of "The Church Its Own Witness,"

which, so far as he was concerned, left him entirely aloof from the controversy. Great as was the disappointment, in one way his prudence compelled recognition, smiling though sad.

Some time afterward Mr. Gladstone said to me: "I wish I had not written that article on Mr. Ingersoll. I feel as if I had had a tussle with a chimney-sweep. I understand that he has been sent to gaol for sending improper books through the mails."

I hastened to correct him, and to assure him of "the colonel's" blameless moral character. He listened and with a sweep of emphatic magnanimity which was amusing declared: "Then I shall never say another word about it."

Much was whispered, and hardly less asserted, during his closing years in reference to what was sometimes called his craftiness and sometimes — by those who were friendly — his sagacity. Not a Grand Old Man, but a very shifty, beguiling old man, was the definition of the antagonists who closed around him in captious and jarring factions after the Home Rule schism. He was fully conscious of his own political astuteness, and chuckled as he spoke to me of the extraordinary vogue which carried a chance description of himself as "an old parlimentary hand" around the world.

A delegation of Irish Nationalists once went to Hawarden to ascertain his position in reference to their projects, and after spending a delightful day there they found on reaching Chester on their way back to London that instead of getting him to define himself he had evaded them at every point with a suavity which had quite blinded them while they were in his presence to the circumvention of their purpose.

But practised as he was in diplomacy, in argument, and in debate — in all the tactics and strategies of politics — it was not difficult to move him and surprise him into flares of passion. He believed in righteous indignation, and when he manifested it there was an impaling fierceness in his eyes and an impetuosity of speech that made a startling contrast to his customary urbanity and self-control. The intensity of his feelings and his convictions extended to many things, even apparent trifles. "He will talk about a bit of old china as if he were pleading before the judgment seat of God," a friend said of him, and in his endeavour to persuade and convince he exerted much the same compelling charm and solemnity of manner in relation to a fragment of bric-à-brac as in the conversion of a theological or political adversary.

He was capable of rather violent antipathies undoubtedly. Mr. Tollemache reports how, when he suggested that Mr. Parnell was a pigmy compared with Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone replied sharply: "He was nothing of the sort! He had statesman-like qualities, and I found him a wonderfully good man to do business with, until I discovered him to be a consummate liar."

Nor was Mr. Gladstone less explicit when on a certain occasion I repeated something which Mr. Chamberlain had said in reference to a matter of politics — a colleague who had been one of the first to secede from him in the great schism, which led to the formation of the Liberal Unionist party. Mr. Chamberlain had been in Mr. Gladstone's cabinet, and while there had been one of the most radical and devoted of his coadjutors — he has been one of the most conspicuous members of other cabinets since.

Frowning and with a sudden deepening and hardening of the voice, Mr. Gladstone turned and said: "Does he say that? What does it matter? Can there be ten men left in England who believe anything *he* says?"

Those were days of disruption and almost inconceivable hate. Many of those who had been staunch Gladstonians — Birmingham Radicals and North Country non-conformists as well as moderate Whigs — found themselves arrayed under Tory banners across the way, and the Duke of Westminster with uncontrollable impatience turned the portrait of his former leader to the wall to begin with and later on turned it out of his house. Probably political feeling never ran higher or more rancorously in England than it did then, and there was an attempt to ostracize Mr. Gladstone, not only politically, but socially. Men and women of rank and power refused to go to parties at which it was understood he would be present, and could they have had their way and put the clock back a few centuries he would have been marched into the palace yard and with as much celerity as possible hanged or beheaded without compunction and without regard to the constitution.

Undoubtedly when the provocation was adequate, especially toward the end of his life, Mr. Gladstone came to be a good hater, though his magnanimity with foes was one of his most striking characteristics. When one of his bitterest critics in parliament died, it was he who rose to bear testimony to the excellence of the departed, and this was done in the most touching way, and with evident sincerity. The caustic scoffing of Disraeli never goaded him into reprisals. In his later campaigns, however, he sometimes lost his temper, as

when making a speech in Midlothian an inconsiderate auditor "heckled" him, as they say there — that is, interrupted him with needless questions intended to confuse. He bore it patiently for a while and then suddenly paused in his argument to swoop down on his tormentor like an eagle on its quarry.

I remember another occasion, at a dinner party, when, besides Mr. Gladstone, a certain bumptious editor was present. "I received a note from you a few days ago," said the great man pleasantly. "From me? Not from me. I am sure you didn't! You may have had one from my secretary." Mr. Gladstone, though clearly hurt, nodded his head gently in acquiescence, and as the dinner progressed, became, as was natural, the "predominant partner" in the conversation. All the guests turned to him and all listened, and to all of them he spoke in turn — all except Mr. Editor, who strove in vain to get a word in edgewise for the rest of the evening. Mr. Gladstone would neither see him nor hear him, and, except to himself, he was non-existent.

Another scene I recall when a Conservative member of the House of Commons, with savage indelicacy, attributed some alleged inaccuracy of Mr. Gladstone's to the infirmity of years. "I am unable to determine to what exact degree I am suffering from the infirmities of age," he replied, glowing with heat, "but I will venture to say that, while sensible that the lapse of time is undoubtedly extremely formidable, and affects me in more than one particular, yet I hope for a little while, at any rate, I may not be wholly unable to cope with antagonists of the calibre of the right honourable gentleman opposite."

Those were days, too, that gave many opportunities

to the editor whose pages — *Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur* — were open to debate. Foremost in the revolt was the late Duke of Argyll, and the bitterness of his protest was in proportion to the love he had hitherto borne the great leader of the united Liberal party to which they had both belonged and whose responsibilities they had shared. It was not difficult to induce him to write on the matter, for, as is well known, he was not only a man of no less intense feelings than Mr. Gladstone himself, but also a facile and industrious writer.

Let me warn Americans of another thing to be kept in mind — wrote his grace. They must not trust the accuracy of Mr. Gladstone's assertions about the past history of Ireland. All his utterances have been at least one-sided and partisan in character. Very often they have been in absolute defiance of the facts. The same tone of inflated fable about Irish history colours every speech he makes, and if it were possible to say that it represents even an approximation to the truth it would leave us in bewilderment as to how he never discovered all this till he was past seventy-five years of age, and how he, even up to that age, denounced those Irishmen who held similar language as the excuse for their violent and revolutionary remedies. It is vain to go back to Irish history to establish any real connection between the long miseries of the country and the English invasion or the later English colonizations. The Celtic Church was as tribal as the Celtic clans. It joined and stimulated all their barbarous intertribal wars, the monastic bodies fought with each other, and slaughtered each other, and wasted each other's lands continually. It is the grossest of all historical delusions that the miseries of Ireland have been due to external causes. They were due to the utter absence of civilizing institutions; and that again was due to the fact that Ireland was never conquered as England was conquered. No race superior in organization ever made itself complete master of the country. In England we are now all proud of the "conquest." It was a great step in our progress. The poorer Irish longed to be admitted to the benefits of English law. But the Celtic chiefs and the half-Celticized Norman lords preferred their own tribal usages, because these gave them more complete power over the people.

I have written this *currente calamo*. But I wish my American friends to

understand that it is on principles well understood among them, and which they considered in their own constitution, that so many here are determined to resist and oppose to the uttermost the anarchical attempt to disintegrate the United Kingdom — just as they resisted the attempt to break up the United Republic in the interests of slavery and secession.

No doubt many readers can recall Tenniel's cartoon based on a popular picture of a little terrier, aroused from his sleep by the mention of "rats," the terrier appearing in the caricature with Mr. Gladstone's head instead of its own, and awaking to challenge and alertness the moment "atrocities" are whispered. "Who said rats" is the name of the original. "Who said atrocities?" the name of the parody. No other portrait of him is so successful in giving that expression of bristling indignation and vehemence; the hawk-like preparedness to swoop; the electrification of muscle and nerve, and the imminence of reprisal alarming, even before it struck, which appeared when he was unexpectedly stung by an unforeseen adversary.

Thus he looked when I showed him "proofs" of the duke's article. Would he answer it? I confess that the question was asked with little expectation of an affirmative reply, but to my surprise he consented at once and within a few days his rejoinder was in my hands. A paragraph or two may be quoted to show the temper of it.

Those who wish for arguments on the subject must look elsewhere [than in the duke's article]. It is best to separate altogether this paper from the personality of its eloquent and distinguished author, and regarding it in the abstract as we regard a proposition of Euclid, to take our measure of it simply as an example of the highest heights and the longest lengths to which assertion can be pushed apart from citation, from reference, from authority, from that examination of either the facts or the literature of the

case, to which the writer does not condescend. Of this he becomes sensibly aware toward the close of his paper and he informs the reader accordingly that he has written it *currente calamo*. A truly singular announcement. The *currens calamus* is an instrument well adapted for the journalist who in the small hours of the night has to render for the morning papers, in a few minutes, the pith or the froth, as the case may be, of the debate scarcely ended, or the telegram just arrived, but surely is less appropriate for a statesman who dates his birth as a cabinet minister from forty years back, and who has now been spending many of those years in leisure, and it is a most equivocal compliment to the American nation, which has taken its stand on the side of Ireland through its legislators, its governors, its very highest organs, as well as its countless masses, to suppose it will execute its volte-face at a moment's wavering in obedience to a *currens calamus*.

And it is a *currens calamus* indeed; for the article affords no indication that its author has ever reined in the gallop of his pen for a moment to study any book or any speech or pamphlet about Ireland. There is one wonderful exception: the duke has been reading, and has cited, Montalembert's "Monks of the West," from which he learns that Ireland had its golden age "some thirteen hundred years ago"; that even then the Celtic Church had "incurable vices of constitution," and that there was no law in the country except the English law "in the smaller area of the Pale" — which Pale and which English law had no existence in Ireland until more than six centuries afterward. Such is the working of the *currens calamus* when the article accidentally stumbles into the domain of fact.

It should be remembered that at this time Mr. Gladstone was still prime minister, and that it was an unprecedented thing for a prime minister while in office to discuss his own policy in a public print, more especially in a foreign review. I am sorry to say his doing so exposed him to much criticism from the press of both his opponents and his partisans, but I have mentioned the incident to show his impetuosity and his inability to restrain his rage when he was sufficiently moved. Had it been written by another person the duke's article would no doubt have gone unnoticed, but coming from so old a friend and colleague it *had* to be answered, and even the traditions of his high position, circumspect and fas-

tidious as his habit was in such matters, were not enough to silence him under the extreme provocation. It is pleasant also to remember that the friendship, lifelong but for this interruption, between him and the duke was soon afterward restored, and that the reconciliation was the subject of another of Tenniel's wonderful cartoons.

As Mr. James Bryce has said, one of the strange contrasts which Mr. Gladstone's character presented was his excitability on small occasions and his perfect composure on great ones. He would sometimes, in a debate which had arisen suddenly, say imprudent things owing to the strength of his emotions, and give a dangerous opening to his adversaries, while at another time when the crisis was much more serious he would be perfectly tranquil, and give no sign, either at the decisive moment or afterward, that he had been holding his feelings in the strictest control and straining all his powers to go exactly as far as it was safe to go, and no farther.

His prejudices were undoubtedly strong and in some instances even insuperable, but I find it hard to believe what Dean Farrar, now dead, once said of him to me. "He has always stood between me and preferment. And do you know why? Simply because, meeting him once at dinner, I could not agree with him as to some of his opinions of Homer."

Willing to talk about and listen to many subjects with extraordinary inquisitiveness and patience, there were others that it was not safe to mention to him, and an example of this may be quoted here from Mr. Lionel Tollemache's "Conversations":

"If the righteous are to be severed from the wicked immediately after death, what need will there be for a day of judgment?" Mr. Tollemache

asked him. "Would it not be a strange anomaly that the dying thief and Dives should be called upon at the last day to make their defence before the Tribunal of God, if each of them, the former in Paradise and the latter in torments, has already learnt by experience what the final sentence on him is to be? Would not the condemned be entitled to say of such a proceeding? 'Tis like a trial after execution.'"

"I really cannot answer such questions," Mr. Gladstone replied, with unusual heat. "The Almighty never took me into His confidence as to why there is to be a day of judgment."

"I felt that it was impossible to press the matter further," says Mr. Tollemache, and thus in his "Boswellizing" as he properly calls his report and as these fragments of mine may be called, he records without shirking or shrinking a very characteristic attitude of Mr. Gladstone's. There were several subjects on which it was wise to "not press the matter further."

Enough remained to impress any one admitted to his companionship with the breadth and variety of his interests, though his attitude of deference and patience in seeking knowledge was often embarrassing to a visitor who had every reason to feel that it was more becoming and more profitable to listen than to talk. In the course of a walk through the garden at Hawarden, or a drive through the park, or a climb to the top of the gray, ivy-mantled tower, the only fragment of the original castle that remains — in the course of one afternoon — I have heard him speak of such diverse subjects as the responsibilities of wealth, the indifference to which he regarded as the greatest danger confronting the United States; of Samuel Butler, whom he regarded as the best guide through perplexities of thought and conduct in moral life; of changes in political life in England, which he thought was deteriorating; of changes in the public schools such as Eton and Harrow, which for all

their imperfections he considered of incalculable advantage to the national character; of his old friend Tennyson; of his idolized Homer, and of the extravagance of American humour! He carried in his memory a varied stock of examples of the latter, and laughed like a boy over them as he repeated them, especially over the story of the Bostonian who, when asked what he thought of Shakespeare, said: "He was a great man. I don't suppose there are more than ten men *even in Boston* who could have written Shakespeare's works." And over the boastful clerk who, when told by the employeé of another firm that its correspondence involved an expenditure of five thousand dollars a year for ink, replied: "That's nothing. Last year we stopped dotting our 'i's,' and saved ten thousand dollars by that alone."

Once singularly erect and majestic in bearing, he became before the end but a shadow of his former self. His shoulders could barely support the weight of his massive head, and the whole figure had shrunk and grown tremulous. It was a very old man who greeted me in the hall when, within a year of his death I again had the honour of being invited to Hawarden — an old man in a loose gray suit with a flower in the buttonhole, a "billycock" hat, and one of the famous high collars cutting into a grizzled fringe of beard. But so far as could be discovered, the deterioration was wholly of the body; no diminution of force was visible in the eagerness with which he attacked every subject that came up for conversation, or in his vivacity, or in his memory, which recalled even minor incidents of years before. The once sonorous voice was huskier, the once flashing eye paler, and his locomotion feebler, but otherwise he was un-

changed — as courtly as ever, as graciously solicitous for his guests, as omnivorous for information, as universal in his interests. But his life had become simpler and more retired, and his activities curtailed. Sundry naps were necessary to carry him through from eight in the morning till eleven at night. Still he was "putting in" between reading and writing six or seven hours of work a day, and this without any amanuensis or secretarial assistance.

International copyright was another topic and of a clause in the act he said: "What should it matter where a book is *printed?* A book is *made* in its author's head." Free trade was another. "England commands the sea now," he said. "The United States could command it if she were a free-trade country." The wastefulness of the ever-increasing armaments of Europe was then spoken of, and then the English cathedrals. "Our cathedrals are the best inheritance we have from the Middle Ages. There are a few houses in England that have true antiquity, only a few, but the best possession England has, is her cathedrals." The relations between Doctor Döllinger and Cardinal Manning were touched upon and then the American accent. "Many Americans do not say American, but *Amurcan*," he said.

Even in those days he was a very lively companion at the luncheon table, and Mrs. Gladstone did not escape his banter, though it was touching to see the looks of mutual adoration which passed between them. He was usually far too serious to be epigrammatic, but his criticism of Jane Austen (he read many novels) — "she neither dives nor soars" — was an illustration of the pointed brevity with which he sometimes expressed himself. For all his cheerfulness it was possible to discover some misgiving of the kind old men usually have

as to the competence of those who succeed them in power. His detestation of the most prominent politician in England then was undisguised and unqualified — I have already revealed how outspoken it was. He mentioned Lord Salisbury with an expressive shrug, though he had both admiration and affection for Mr. Balfour, and there were others bound to him by old associations and political ties of whom he spoke with obvious toleration and indulgence as well-meaning but dubious apprentices. He protested vehemently against extravagance in national expenditure. "There is only one thing for which I could give them an appropriation," he said, "and that would be an appropriation for the enlargement of Bedlam." He gurgled with laughter as he said this and quickly added, "And I know what they would say: 'And you are the first man we shall put in it.'"

I urged him to write his autobiography, but the proposition had no attractions for him, backed though it was by the assurance of uncommon pecuniary results. He had resolved to limit his literary activity to the two subjects which had a supreme interest for him — Olympian religion and Butler. But later on when he was in his eighty-eighth year I succeeded in persuading him to give the *Youth's Companion* in his recollections of Hallam — the A. H. Hallam of "In Memoriam"—what at all events was a fragment of autobiography, and that I believe was the last thing (penned, as all his manuscripts were, in his own hand from beginning to end, with scarcely an erasure or an interlineation) he ever wrote for publication.

"Far back in the distance of my early life, and upon a surface not yet ruffled by contention, there lies the memory of a friendship surpassing every other that has ever been enjoyed by one greatly blessed both in the number and in the excellence of his friends.

MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH MR. GLADSTONE

It is the simple truth that Arthur Henry Hallam was a spirit so exceptional that everything with which he was brought into relation during his shortened passage through this world came to be, through this contact, glorified by a touch of the ideal. Among his contemporaries at Eton, that queen of visible homes for the ideal schoolboy, he stood supreme among all his fellows; and the long life through which I have since wound my way, and which has brought me into contact with so many men of rich endowments, leaves him where he then stood, as to natural gifts, so far as my estimation is concerned.

Looking back seventy odd years he recalled his schooldays with that spiritualized personality in language both pathetic and exalted, which, if no other evidence existed, would illuminate his natural nobility and that enthusiasm for perfection which animated him to the end of his days.

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How shall I apologize for these dissolving views, so trivial and so insubstantial? I can imagine the people of whom I have written offering in their own behalf a similar disclaimer to that behind which Henry James hedged himself from a biographer. "What is written about me has nothing to do with me, *my me*," he said. "It is only the other person's equivalent for that mystery, whatever it may be. Thereby if you have found anything to say about our apparently blameless little time together, it is your little affair exclusively." So of my subjects; the responsibility is mine and not theirs.

THE END